

U.N. appeals for end to Beirut clashes

UNITED NATIONS (R) — U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar Wednesday appealed to Lebanon's government and all concerned to end the violence that has caused heavy civilian casualties and damage in Beirut in the past few days. A statement issued through a spokesman said: "The secretary general is deeply concerned at the escalation of fighting in Beirut, resulting in grievous casualties and material destruction on all sides." The statement particularly noted the heavy fighting and casualties in and around the Palestinian refugee camps in the Lebanese capital, where Palestinians have been battling members of the Shi'ite Amal militia. "The secretary general appeals to the Lebanese government and to all concerned to make every possible effort to put an end to violence involving the civilian population, to heed the sufferings and provide for the care of all those who have already been so gravely afflicted," the statement concluded.

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'Group of 77' assails Israeli project

NAIROBI (R) — A body representing the world's developing countries has condemned Israeli plans to build a canal linking the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, saying it would cause irreparable damage to Jordan's environment. The criticism is contained in a resolution drafted by the "Group of 77" for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) conference. Previous UNEP conferences have passed similar resolutions. The latest draft says the canal will cause direct, serious and irreparable damage to man and his environment in Jordan and to Jordan's rights and legitimate vital interests in the economic, agricultural, demographic and ecological fields. The canal would utilise the 400-metre height difference between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, the lowest spot on earth, to generate electricity, Israel says.

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Regent cables good wishes to Bonn

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, sent a cable of good wishes to West German President Richard von Weizsacker congratulating him on the Regent's name and on behalf of the people of Jordan on the occasion of West Germany's national day. In his cable, Prince Hassan wished the people of West Germany further progress and prosperity.

Husak reelected Czech president

VIENNA (R) — Czechoslovak Communist Party leader Gustav Husak, 72, was reelected Wednesday to his third five-year term as head of state, the official Cereka news agency reported. He was unanimously elected in a secret ballot at a special session of both chambers of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly which was held in Prague's Hradcany Castle.

Libyan envoy pays 4-day Cairo visit

CAIRO (R) — An envoy of Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi had four days of talks in Cairo with a senior aide to President Hosni Mubarak, sources close to the Egyptian government said Wednesday. The sources declined to name the aide but identified the envoy as Gaddaf Al Dammi. He was in Cairo last weekend when Col. Qadhafi, visiting Khartoum for talks with Sudan's new military leaders, called for Mr. Mubarak's overthrow.

Son Sann leaves Cairo after talks

CAIRO (AP) — Kampuchean rebel leader Son Sann departed Wednesday, ending a four-day official visit during which he had talks with Egyptian officials, the Middle East News Agency said. Son Sann discussed with Prime Minister Kamal Hassan Ali ways to strengthen bilateral relations in all fields as well as Middle East and South East Asia issues, the agency said without giving details. Airport sources said Son Sann's destination was Paris.

Pakistani Shi'ites call off agitation

ISLAMABAD (R) — A Pakistani Shi'ite Muslim group has called off a seven-month campaign over religious demands following an understanding with Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo, the official APP news agency said Wednesday. In a meeting between Mr. Junejo and Tehrik leaders, a committee including government ministers was set up to examine Shi'ite demands and make recommendations in six months, APP said.

Travelling Israelis to pay more

TEL AVIV (R) — Israelis going abroad will have to pay \$300 plus 20 per cent of their ticket prices when they leave the country because of an increase in travel tax approved Wednesday. The new regulation, aimed at keeping foreign currency from being spent outside the inflation-racked country, takes effect on Monday. Previously Israelis had been paying \$150 plus the ticket tax.

Jordan, PLO launch intensive efforts to end attack on Beirut camps

By a Jordan Times Staff Writer

AMMAN — Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Wednesday launched intensified efforts on the Arab and international levels to seek an end to attacks launched against Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut by Lebanese Amal militiamen.

His Majesty King Hussein, currently in London on his way to Washington for talks with U.S. President Ronald Reagan on prospects for a just Middle East peace, Wednesday telephoned His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and discussed with him "the necessity for quick Arab and international action to ensure the safety and security of the inhabitants of the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon," the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, reported.

Following the King's call, the Regent visited the Prime Ministry and held talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Wahab Al Majali and Minister of Information Mohammad Al Khatib on the situation in the camps near Beirut and emphasised the need for exerting "all possible efforts on the Arab and international levels" to seek an end to the fighting and ensure the safety of the residents of the camps, Petra said.

Jordan has also supported a call by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat for an emergency session of the Arab League Council to debate the situation in Lebanon. The Jordanian government Wednesday contacted the Kingdom's permanent delegate to the Arab League Headquarters in Tunis and asked him to convey to the league Jordan's "absolute support for the PLO's request for an extraordinary session of the Arab League Council to ensure that all Arab countries bear their responsibilities towards the situation and ensure the safety and security of the Palestinian refugees (in Lebanon) and seek an end to the intensive aggressions on the Palestinian camps," Petra reported.

The predominantly Shi'ite Amal militia launched attacks on the Sabra, Shatila and Bourj Al Barajneh Palestinian refugee

camp last Sunday and about 130 people have been killed and over 700 wounded in the clashes which ensued when Palestinian fighters inside the camps resisted the Amal onslaught, according to reports reaching here Wednesday.

All mosques in Jordan will hold a special prayer on Friday in memory of the dead in the camps in Beirut, Petra said.

Jordan, in coordination with the PLO, also continued contacts with Arab countries to "crystallise a quick and effective Arab stand to deal with the catastrophic situation arising from continued military attacks on the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon," the news agency said.

Jordan also made contacts with the U.N. General Secretariat and the Non-Aligned Movement to urge the international community to move and secure the safety of the Palestinian refugees in Beirut.

The PLO, on its part, Wednesday called on the U.N. Security Council to intervene immediately to stop the fighting in Beirut. The PLO chairman contacted Mr. Zuhdi Terzi, the PLO's permanent observer at the U.N., and briefed him on the situation and asked him to contact the U.N. secretary general with the request for Security Council intervention in the situation, Petra said.

Mr. Arafat also sent messages to King Hassan II of Morocco, chairman of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), Non-Aligned Movement Chairman and Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi and Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Chairman and Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere seeking their intervention to end the Beirut fighting.

"In the name of the Palestinian people and the PLO, I urge you... to intercede with the concerned parties, especially the Syrian government, to stop this bloody mas-



Palestinian residents of the Bourj Al Barajneh camp flee their homes Wednesday in the face of continued attacks by militiamen of the Shi'ite Amal movement (AP wirephoto)

Amal eases attacks on camps after 'warning' rocket salvos

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Palestinian gunners hammered Shi'ite Muslim militia strongholds in south Beirut with artillery and Soviet-made Grad rockets Wednesday to blunt attacks by Shi'ite militiamen on Palestinian fighters trapped in refugee camps on the city's west side.

An eight-rocket barrage at noon that authoritative Palestinian sources said was fired from hill positions east of Beirut, was followed by a massive artillery bombardment in the afternoon. The barrages came as militiamen of the Shi'ite Amal movement and Palestinians, encircled in the camps locked in their fiercest battles since fighting erupted Sunday.

Grey clouds of smoke billowed above the shelled residential neighbourhood of Dahieh, Sultan Ibrahim, Jaah and Aouzai on the Lebanese capital's southern fringe.

Nabih Berri, leader of the Shi'ite Amal militia, said in a statement the bombardment came from Palestinian gun positions in the central Lebanese mountains east of the city.

He said the area the barrages came from was controlled by "a certain Palestinian organisation." He did not name the group.

Mr. Berri appeared to be exonerating his civil war ally, socialist leader Walid Junblatt, and the Syrian army of responsibility for the bombardment.

Mr. Junblatt's Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and Syrian troops control the central mountains. But they have long allowed Palestinian groups opposed to Palestine Liberation Organisation

(PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat to set up gun positions there.

Associated Press correspondent Ed Blanche saw one rocket salvo crash near the entrance of the Shatila camp as Amal militiamen launched an assault against a Palestinian stronghold on the edge of the camp.

The attackers were advancing on foot with cover of anti-aircraft and B-10 recoilless rifle fire toward the southern edge of Shatila when the incoming salvo struck. They immediately retreated, Blanche reported.

It was apparent from the timing of the barrage that the defenders had radioed a request for artillery intervention against the Amal attack.

A Palestinian spokesman, who declined to be identified, also denied that Palestinian gun positions in the mountains hit west Beirut. He said the rocket attack hit civilians inside and outside the besieged camps at the same time.

But a senior Palestinian source privately confirmed the rocket attack was unleashed by the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) to ease Amal's military pressure on the camps.

"This was just a message," said the source, who spoke to the AP on condition he was not named.

"If they try to thrust against the camps, we shall hit harder."

The three days of fighting at the Bourj Al Barajneh, Sabra and Shatila camps had left around 130 dead and more than 500 wounded, security sources estimated.

Reuter reporters said fighting camps was less intense Wednesday than on Monday and Tuesday, when thousands of people

fled the camps. But overnight flare-ups drove back Red Cross teams seeking wounded at Bourj Al Barajneh camp.

The Red Cross rescued 13 wounded just before dawn, but came under heavy fire and left when an ambulance was hit, a Red Cross spokesman said. "There are more wounded in the camp, but we did not have time to make a survey."

Security sources quoted by Reuter were unable to confirm the reports that shells hitting Shi'ite areas came from Palestinian positions in PSP-controlled hills above Beirut.

Beirut Radio and Falange radio reports were denied by the PSP "Voice of the Mountain" station, which said the shells came from east Beirut.

Mr. Junblatt, an ally of Syrian-backed Palestinian groups, met Syrian officials in Damascus Tuesday night after talks with Palestinian commando leaders in Lebanon, newspapers reported.

Mr. Junblatt is also allied to Amal, which says it will not let Palestinians regain the control of west Beirut and South Lebanon as they had before Israel's 1982 invasion forced out the PLO.

One Shi'ite resident of Sabra camp made homeless said residents remaining inside, both Lebanese and Palestinian, were being "terrorised in their shelters."

Amal men at Bourj Al Barajneh said they had surrounded the camp centre but had not gained control. They said the Palestinian defenders included old people and children, as well as young men.

Masri to visit Moscow next week

AMMAN (J.T.) — Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri will visit Moscow early next week for talks with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko on joint Jordanian-Palestinian moves for Middle East peace, the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, said Wednesday.

Mr. Masri will also deliver a letter from His Majesty King Hussein to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, it said.

The agency gave no specific date for the visit. King Hussein will be in Washington next week for talks with President Reagan on the Feb. 11 agreement between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The accord is aimed at getting negotiations under way with a view to solving the Palestinian problem and bringing peace to the region.

It calls for total Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967 and the creation of a Palestinian state confederated with Jordan in return for peace with Israel.

Two senior PLO envoys, Political Department chief Farouq Kaddoumi and Executive Committee member Mohammad Milhem visited Moscow earlier this month for talks with senior Soviet officials on the accord.

Announcing Mr. Masri's planned visit to Moscow, Petra did not say whether it will be part of a visit to the Soviet capital by a seven-member Arab committee, of which he is a member, for talks with Kremlin leaders on ways to end Gulf war.

The Arab team's planned visit to Moscow next week was announced by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah in Kuwait Wednesday.

Sheikh Sabah said the committee, appointed by the Arab League to find a diplomatic solution to the war, now in its 36th month, would meet Mr. Gorbachev on Monday.

Members would also meet Prime Minister Nikolai Tikhonov and Foreign Minister Gromyko, Sheikh Sabah told reporters.

The visit is part of a tour of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. The committee has already visited France, China and Britain, while a date has still to be set for a trip to Washington.

The committee includes the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco and North Yemen, and Arab League Secretary-General Chadi Khilfi.

U.S. panel approves \$1.5 billion Israel aid

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee on Tuesday approved \$1.5 billion in emergency extra aid for Israel.

The committee passed on a voice vote the foreign aid section of the supplemental aid bill for the current fiscal year, including the aid for Israel and an additional \$500 million for Egypt.

U.S. President Ronald Reagan's administration requested the extra aid to help the two Middle Eastern countries.

"We did provide the administration absolute discretion as to the time table," said opposition Democratic Congressman David Obey, chairman of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee.

Last week the U.S. Senate approved the legislation necessary to authorise the extra aid in Congress' two-step process of authorisation and appropriation. The companion authorisation bill is pending in the House, with final action expected next month.

No objections were raised in the committee to the supplemental appropriation, which is in addition to \$2.6 billion in cash gifts already approved for Israel and \$2.2 billion in cash, weapons and development projects for Egypt.

20,000 Tamils 'ordered to quit homes'

COLOMBO (Agencies) — About 20,000 Tamils have been ordered by troops to quit their homes, a local community leader said Wednesday as President Junius Jayewardene warned that Sri Lanka's ethnic crisis was part of a "Marxist plot" to destabilise democracies.

N.M. Sornabala, president of the citizens' committee in Vavuniya town, about 300 kilometres north of Colombo, told Reuters by telephone the Tamils had been told to leave for "security reasons."

He said four vehicles packed with soldiers arrived Tuesday at the office of a government official in Cheddikulam district, about 40 kilometres west of Vavuniya.

The troops told the official responsible for administering the

area that everyone should leave their homes in two weeks' time for "security reasons," he said.

Mr. Sornabala said about 5,000 families from the island's minority Tamil community or 20,000 people lived in several villages in the area.

The official was not available for comment. A spokesman for the home (interior) ministry in Colombo said he was aware of the issue, but declined comment.

A Vavuniya resident who asked not to be named said: "There are some guerrilla camps in the area and we think the security forces want to flush them out."

Troops and police have stepped up a search for guerrillas fighting to set up a separate state in the north for Sri Lanka's 2.5 million

Tamils.

Information Minister Anandadasa de Alwis said Mr. Jayewardene told a meeting of religious leaders in Colombo that clashes between security forces and separatist guerrillas were more than an ethnic problem.

"It is part of a serious international events that show a Marxist-oriented plan to destabilise democratic countries," Mr. de Alwis quoted Mr. Jayewardene as saying.

The one-hour meeting with Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Muslim clergy followed an escalation of violence, including an attack by guerrillas in which about 145 people died in the sacred Buddhist city of Anuradhapura last Tuesday.

Genscher urges joint European stand on SDI

PARIS (R) — West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher Wednesday urged West European states to coordinate their response to an American offer of a share in space defence research.

Mr. Genscher, addressing the assembly of the Western European Union (WEU), said the seven-nation group had already begun to act in unison after a decision last year to revitalise it.

In replying to President Reagan's offer to join in research in his strategic defence initiative (SDI), "nobody should single himself out, and nobody should be singled out," Mr. Genscher said.

The West German minister was speaking before talks with President Francois Mitterrand, who took France's allies by surprise three weeks ago by turning down Mr. Reagan's offer.

Mr. Genscher's visit here is aimed at clearing up disputes which arose between Paris and Bonn on SDI and a series of other issues at the Bonn economic summit in early May.

WEU ministers agreed in April to aim "as far as possible" for a coordinated response to the American offer.

While France has said no, Britain and West Germany have indicated they will accept.

Mr. Genscher said strategic, rather than technological factors would have to be given priority in making a final judgement on SDI.

Mr. Genscher's talks here with Mr. Mitterrand and External Relations Minister Roland Dumas will be followed by a meeting between Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the French president in West Germany on May 28.

Answering questions, Mr. Genscher said there was "no cause for concern" about the state of relations between France and Germany.

Mr. Genscher said in his speech that West European countries must pool their technological capabilities in order to remain a partner of the United States on equal terms.

60 killed, 190 wounded in huge east Beirut blast

BEIRUT (Agencies) — A car packed with up to 200 kilograms of explosives blew up in an east Beirut suburb during the afternoon rush hour Wednesday, killing at least 60 people and injuring 190, police said.

Many of the victims, which included schoolchildren, were burned beyond recognition by the explosion in the fashionable, pine-wooded Sin Al Fil neighbourhood in the predominantly Christian east Beirut.

Reported conflicting over whether the explosion was deliberate or accidental.

The Associated Press quoted police as saying there was no-one in the car, which was parked. But eyewitnesses quoted by Reuter said the explosion appeared to be accidental as the car was driving through a road intersection jammed with rush hour traffic.

Police drove mothers screaming for their children back from blazing buildings after the explosion which came as children were returning from school.

Eyewitnesses told Reuter at least 15 children were killed in a passing school bus that turned into an inferno. A Reuter reporter saw rescue workers carry more dead children from shattered buildings.

The blast blew out the front and back walls of two high-rise apartment blocks, collapsed the front wall of another block, burned several motorists alive in their cars and crushed pedestrians beneath vehicles hurled on top of them.

Amid scenes of pandemonium, shrieking mothers were driven

back through the smoke of blazing buildings and cars by policemen who shot into the air to clear space for rescuers.

The "Voice of Lebanon" radio station appealed for urgent blood donors to cope with what it termed a "catastrophic massacre."

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the bombing by any of Lebanon's armed factions.

Cars were snarled bumper-to-bumper when the bomb exploded. More than 50 cars were set on fire, police said.

The inferno trapped scores of people in their cars. Dozens of vehicles were turned into mangled wrecks. Charred bodies lay among the blackened, twisted metal.

A three-month-old girl cut by flying glass lay on the sidewalk, beside the dismembered body of her mother.

The street filled with choking black smoke, hampering firemen and rescue teams.

As the rescue operation got underway, artillery shells began falling in nearby areas.

People who jammed the streets around the bombing fled for cover. There was no immediate word of any casualties from the shelling.

Rescue workers dug into the pile of wreckage searching for victims through the afternoon. The water from firemen's hoses mixed with the ash from the burning cars to cover the street in a black sludge.

Militiamen of the "Lebanese Forces", pistols sticking from their

waistbands, ran through the smoke dragging charred bodies out. Wounded people cried from the smoke for help.

Bodies were carried out on stretchers covered in blood-soaked blankets. A car engine was blown into the ripped-open parlour of a second-floor apartment by the force of the huge explosion.

Distraught relatives stumbled through the mounds of wreckage seeking loved ones. Children, some of them toddlers in shorts, were carried out in the arms of grim-faced rescuers and put into private cars to be rushed to hospital when they could not find ambulances.

The devastated street looked like a smoldering junk yard. Blackened limbs stuck out of the scorched wrecks.

It was the second car bomb explosion in Beirut in less than a week. A car rigged with explosives blew up outside a militia office in west Beirut last Friday, wounding eight people.

Wednesday's blast was the worst bombing in Beirut since a car bomb exploded outside the home of Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, the spiritual guide of Lebanon's Shi'ite Muslim community March 8.

The Washington Post said the attack was carried out by a CIA-trained unit in west Beirut that included Lebanese intelligence personnel.

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Fadlallah says he did not provoke attack on Marines

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, a major leader of Shi'ite Muslims in Lebanon, says he has called on his followers to "fight colonialism" but did not provoke the attack on U.S. Marine headquarters in Beirut in which 24 Americans were killed.

"If colonialism oppresses a people, the people should fight it," he said in an interview that will appear in the next issue of the magazine Middle East Insight. "But to say that I lead people to do violent acts — no."

Published reports linking Fadlallah to the October 1983 bombing helped focus attention on the little known cleric who now is frequently identified as the leader of the militant Shi'ite group Hezbollah, the Party of God.

Last March, more than 8 people were killed and more than 200 wounded in an attempt on his life. The Washington Post reported last week that the attack on Mr. Fadlallah was carried out by a Lebanese group trained by Central Intelligence Agency.

Secretary of State George Shultz said the Post story "created a big hubbub about something that is incorrect." The CIA said it "never conducted any training of Lebanese security forces related to the events described."

In the only Western interview after the attack, George A. Nader, editor of the magazine, said he met with Fadlallah in his Beirut home last month and asked him about accusations that Fadlallah had created an atmosphere that inspires suicidal attacks on Americans.

"The West accused me of violence," the Islamic cleric replied. "In fact, I am a man of dialogue. I have books and a school in dialogue. I ask people to solve their problems through love and understanding, not through the use of violence."

At the same time, Fadlallah accused the United States of exploiting the violence that engulfed Lebanon and approving Israel's invasion in 1982 in which thousands of people were killed. "If you take a poll, you will see that everybody considers the U.S. responsible for what happened," he said.

Fadlallah said the Marines became identified with Israel and the Lebanese government. "This was how the people perceived them," he said. "These same people had to express themselves, and they could do it either in a traditional manner or a non-traditional manner. They chose suicide attacks, which is another form of struggle."

So far as Muslims are concerned, Fadlallah said, "there is no difference between dying with a gun in your hands or exploding." He added: "In a situation of struggle or holy war you have to find the best means to achieve your goals."



A group of newly released Palestinians flash the "V" for victory symbol in the Lebanese port city of Sidon Wednesday. They were freed Monday in a prisoner exchange between Israel and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command under which 1,150 prisoners in Israeli jails were released in exchange for three Israeli soldiers (AP wirephoto).

Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command under which 1,150 prisoners in Israeli jails were released in exchange for three Israeli soldiers (AP wirephoto).

Israeli government debates releasing members of Jewish terrorist group

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Senior ministers of Prime Minister Shimon Peres' cabinet met Wednesday in an effort to avert a crisis over right-wing demands for the release of an accused Jewish terrorist.

Mr. Peres was facing mounting public criticism as a national debate erupted over the repercussions of Monday's exchange of 1,150 Arabs for three captured Israeli soldiers.

Critics warned that the swap could encourage new acts of resistance by Palestinians and weaken the occupation rule by Israel of the West Bank.

The daily Yediot Aharonot newspaper reported that Jewish extremists were threatening vigilante attacks against the 600 Palestinians freed in the West Bank and other Israeli occupied areas.

Israel Radio said the cabinet's security and defence committee, whose deliberations are secret, was taking up the issue of a pardon for 25 Jews accused of terrorist acts against Palestinians.

The radio reported that Mr. Peres suggested the cabinet set up a committee to study the question. Leaders of the two major political parties in Israel's coalition government issued contradictory public statements on the issue of freeing the Jewish underground members even though the decision to make the prisoner exchange was approved unanimously by the cabinet.

Parliament members of Mr. Peres' Labour Party published a statement on Wednesday saying they would "reject any attempt to release the underground for the (Palestinians) have been freed."

The statement denounced attempts to interfere with the judicial process before the completion of the trial.

Mr. Peres and most ministers of his Labour Party are against the government "mixing the issue of delivering Israeli prisoners with any other subject," said his spokesman, Uri Savir.

Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, leader of the Likud bloc, joined the West Bank settlers and other right-wing leaders in demanding clemency for the Jewish terrorists.

Eight underground members have been sentenced up to 10 years for a plot to bomb the Dome of the Rock Muslim shrine in Jerusalem's Old City. The trials of 17 others accused of 1980 car bomb attacks on Palestinian mayors were expected to be completed in the next few weeks.

Spokesmen for Mr. Shamir and Mr. Peres said in telephone interviews with the AP that the controversy could lead to a crisis in the fragile bipartisan government which is already divided on other policy questions.

But officials and analysts said the government was likely to survive the storm of protest via a compromise that would delay a decision about a pardon until after the trial is over.

Tzachi Hanegbi, a Shamir political aide, said the public debate may create "a dynamic that can lead to a (cabinet) crisis." But he predicted the coalition would survive the crisis because "Shamir would not be doing the underground any good by resigning and toppling the government."

Mr. Hanegbi added that Mr. Shamir also expected to win a majority for a pardon. The Hadashot daily showed at least 12 ministers favouring the pardon with only 10 against.

By Israeli law, only the attorney general is empowered to stop a trial in progress and only the president, Chaim Herzog, has the authority to grant a pardon once a defendant has been sentenced.

Although the cabinet has no authority to grant a pardon, a cabinet recommendation would strongly influence a decision by Mr. Herzog.

Yediot Aharonot said Jewish settlers were compiling lists of names and photographs of freed Arab prisoners, threatening to strike at them in revenge for any attacks on Israelis.

He said that the newspaper had received an anonymous phone call on Tuesday and quoted the caller as saying "we have established an underground group that has one goal, to liquidate the terrorists in the (West Bank). We will begin this week."

Prisoners get rousing welcome in Lebanon

SHTOURA, Lebanon (Agencies) — Palestinian commandos and residents in eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley gave a rousing reception to 151 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners released by Israel.

The 48 Palestinians and 103 Lebanese arrived in the Bekaa from Kuneitra in the Golan Heights after being released Monday as part of an exchange of 1,150 Palestinians and Lebanese for three Israeli soldiers.

The rest of the prisoners were exchanged in Geneva and the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

The Lebanese prisoners included members of the mainly Shi'ite Amal Movement, the Syrian National Social Party, the Lebanese Communist Party, "Hezbollah" (the Party of God), the Baath Party, the Workers Party and Arab Socialist Union.

The men were former prisoners of Israel's big Anwar detention camp in South Lebanon taken to Israeli jails when Israel evacuated the camp on April 3 during its withdrawal from South Lebanon.

Meanwhile Eighteen Palestinians and Lebanese released by Israel arrived Tuesday to an emotional, heroes welcome at the coastal port city of Sidon.

By Tuesday afternoon, only 18 arrived in private cars in Sidon. Sources said others chose private

reunions with their families in other parts of the country.

Those who arrived in Sidon, 40 kilometres south of Beirut, were all dressed in olive drab battle fatigues with black and white checked kufiyehs — the traditional Palestinian headwear — wrapped around their necks.

Women ululated and showered their freed relatives with rice and rosewater. They hugged and kissed and chanted "revolution until victory," as the 18 young, bearded men flashed their fingers in "V" for victory signs.

In Amman a Jordanian newspaper said Wednesday 1,012 Palestinians held in Israeli jails were expected to be exchanged shortly for an unspecified number of bodies of Israeli soldiers.

The daily Sawt Al Shaab, quoting an informed Palestinian source in Amman, said the bodies were held by the Fatah commando group, led by Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat.

Asked to comment on the report, Khalil Al Wazir, Mr. Arafat's military aide, told Reuters: "It is premature to say anything now while some steps have yet to be taken."

In Tel Aviv, a spokeswoman for the Israeli army said her office had heard of no plans for another exchange.

Shara, Mitterrand hold talks

PARIS (R) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Shara held what he called positive and constructive talks with French President Francois Mitterrand at the start of a three-day visit to Paris.

Mr. Shara declined to give details of the meeting, but officials said the conflict in Lebanon was a principal topic.

Both countries have pledged support for Lebanese President Amin Gemayel in his efforts to end the sectarian strife and are in broad agreement on peace moves.

However diplomatic sources said Syria, which has an estimated 40,000 troops in Lebanon, did not wish to see the United Nations UNIFIL peacekeeping force in the south of the country reinforced to act as a buffer on the Israeli border. France provides UNIFIL's largest contingent — 1,500 men.

Other issues expected to be discussed during Mr. Shara's visit include the Gulf War, on which Syria has been critical of French support

for Iraq in its war against Iran.

The sources said Syria could be in a position to help France improve its relations with Iran and thereby its ability to promote a compromise solution to the conflict.

However, one point of contention between the two countries — the role of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat — appeared irreconcilable.

Syria regards Arafat as a traitor to the Palestinian cause, while France has supported his efforts to convene Middle East peace talks in conjunction with King Hussein.

On bilateral relations, the sources said France would like to balance a trade deficit with Syria, but much would depend on their discussions on Middle East political issues.

Mr. Shara's visit is the first by a Syrian Foreign Minister since Mr. Mitterrand's Socialist government came to power in 1981.

The French president visited Damascus last November.

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RADIO JORDAN

855 KHz, AM & 99 MHz, FM

& partly on 9560 KHz, SW

Tel: 774111-19

07:00 Light Music
07:30 News
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FOR FRIDAY

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

MAIN CHANNEL

12:00 News Summary
12:15 Evening Show Cont.
12:30 News Summary
12:45 Evening Show Cont.
12:55 News Summary
13:00 Evening Show Cont.
13:15 News Headlines
13:25 Close down

BBC WORLD SERVICE

639, 720, 1413 KHz

07:00 News
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WHAT'S GOING ON

TODAY'S EVENTS

EXHIBITIONS

* An exhibition on famous German composers (Heinrich Schütz, Johann Bach, George Handel) at the Goethe Institute.

* "Visages de la Provence" at the French Cultural Centre.

* The Fourth exhibition of Turkish products and Turkish fashion show at the Jordan International Hotel.

CINEMA

* "Orfeu negro" at 7:45 p.m. at the French Cultural Centre.

VIDEO

* "Les Barons de Nouvelle-Orléans" at 4:00 p.m. at the French Cultural Centre.

CULTURAL CENTRES

Royal Cultural Centre Tel. 610267/

American Cultural Library 644371

British Council 641520

French Cultural Centre 637009

Goethe Institute 641993

Soviet Cultural Centre 644203

Spanish Cultural Centre 624049

Arabic Cultural Centre 639777

Haya Arts Centre 655195

Hussein Youth City 657181

Y.W.C.A. 641793

Y.W.M.C.A. 664251

Amman Municipal Library 636111

University of Jordan Library 843555

MUSEUMS

Pellegrine Museum Jewellery and costumes over 100 years old. Also models from Madaba and Jerash (4th to 18th centuries). The Roman Theatre, Amman. Opening hours: 9.00 a.m. - 5 p.m. Year-round. Tel. 631760.

Jordan Archaeological Museum: Has an excellent collection of the antiquities of Jordan. Jabal Al Qasr (Citadel Hill). Opening hours: 9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. (Fridays and official holidays 10.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.). Closed Tuesdays.

Jordan National Gallery: Contains a collection of paintings, ceramics, and sculptures by contemporary Islamic artists from most of the Muslim countries and a collection of paintings by 19th Century

ARRIVALS

09:15 Bucharest (RO)
12:30 Cairo (EG)
14:45 Doha, Bahrain (RU)
16:45 Kuwait (KU)
18:45 Jeddah (RU)
19:45 Cairo (EG)
20:45 Doha, Bahrain (RU)
21:45 Beirut (RU, MEA)
22:45 Doha, Bahrain (RU)
23:45 Istanbul, Ankara (TU)
24:45 London, Baghdad (RU)
25:45 Muscat, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)

DEPARTURES

06:30 Damascus, Frankfurt (LF)
06:45 Cairo (EG)
08:00 Beirut (RU, MEA)
08:15 Doha, Bahrain (RU)
08:30 Damascus, Paris (AF)
08:45 Vienna, New York (RU)
09:15 Agaba, Cairo (RU)
09:30 Riyadh, Dhahran (SV)
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11:45 Larnaca (CY)
11:55 Baghdad (RU)
12:00 Bucharest (RO)
12:15 London, Beirut (RU)
12:30 Doha, Muscat (RU)
12:45 Baghdad (RU)

PRAYER TIMES

05:57 Fair
05:53 (Sunrise) Doha
12:32 Doha
16:14 Asr
19:25 Maghrib
21:00 Isha

FOR THE TRAVELLER

AMMAN AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Air Jordan International Airport Ltd. (08) 53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

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12:30 Cairo (EG)
14:45 Doha, Bahrain (RU)
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MONEY EXCHANGE

Local selling rates in JLD

Belgian franc 65/ 65.5
Dutch guilder 115.7/ 116.6
Egyptian pound 288.3/ 297.5
French franc 67.29/ 65.9
Iraqi dinar 391/ 398.6
Italian lire (for 100) 20.4/ 20.7
Japanese yen (for 100) 160.3/ 161.6
Kuwaiti dinar 132.4/ 133.6
Lebanese lira 115.5/ 116.3
Omani rial 109.6/ 110.1
Saudi riyal 110.5/ 111.3
Swedish crown 45.1/ 45.5
Swiss franc 155.4/ 156.6
Syrian lira 36.1/ 37
UAE dirham 109.6/ 110.1
U.S. dollar 401.5/ 404
W. German mark 130.8/ 131.8

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

An increase in temperature is expected with light and variable winds becoming southerly moderate. In Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate becoming southerly moderate and seas rough.

LOW HIGH TEMPERATURE IN DEG. C

Amman 22/28
Agaba 22/28
Deserts 14/24
Jordan Valley 18/26

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 25, Agaba 35. Humidity reading: Amman 25 per cent, Agaba 16 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NOS.

EMERGENCIES

Amman governorate 891228
Amman civil defence 198 199
Civil Defence Helpline 271293, 271311
Civil Defence Quesneirah 770733
Ambulance 193, 775111
Amman downtown fire brigade 198
Fire aid 630241
Blood bank 778303
Civil Defence rescue 661111
Fire headquarters 622090-3
Police rescue 192, 621111, 637777
Police headquarters 637777
Traffic police 896390/1
Electric Power Co.

Masri, Kana'an brief U.N. mission on Feb. 11 accord, Israeli malpractices

By Sa'ad G. Hattar
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A United Nations special committee, currently in Amman to investigate Israeli practices against residents of the occupied Arab territories, Wednesday met Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri and Minister of Occupied Territories Affairs Taher Kana'an.

The committee's information officer, Mr. Ben Dorileu, said that the U.N. team was briefed on Israeli practices and the harassment of Arab citizens in the occupied territories.

Mr. Masri briefed members of the committee on the latest developments in the region in the wake of the Feb. 11 accord between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Mr. Masri said that the agreement aims to formulate means to peacefully settle the Palestinian question.

Mr. Dorileu told the Jordan Times that Dr. Kana'an informed the committee about the state of human rights situation in the occupied Arab territories. Dr. Kana'an said: "Israel is an occupation power which is per-

petrating the most brutal violations of its obligations to international laws."

"Israel", Dr. Kana'an went on to say, "is using force to drive Palestinians from their homeland, to keep farmers from their land and is continuing to expropriate Arab land." He said that about 50 per cent of Arab land in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has now been seized for use by the occupying power.

The committee, which was sent to the region to review the latest developments on the basis of information appearing in the press and by conducting interviews with concerned persons and organisations, was refused any cooperation from Israel and was banned from carrying out on-the-spot investigations into the human rights situation in the occupied territories.

During their five-day stay in Amman the committee, headed by U.N. permanent representative of Sri Lanka Nissanka Wijewardane, heard statements by four witnesses regarding Israel's arbitrary and oppressive measures against people in the occupied Arab territories.

Abdul-Rahman Namurah, a

doctor from Hebron, met with the committee and gave a detailed account of the obstructive acts and intimidation which Arabs had to face when they cross the bridge to Jordan. Dr. Namurah also described the harassment of himself and his family including the imprisonment of his brother, who is also a doctor and attempts to confiscate his family land. Restrictions on travel abroad is a daily feature of life in the occupied West Bank, he told the special committee.

During their visit to Syria, the special committee conducted on-the-spot investigations in villages on the Syrian side of the 1973 ceasefire line. Committee members also spoke to 11 people in Damascus, seven of whom were Palestinian refugees from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The other four were forced to flee their homes in the occupied Golan Heights and are currently living in Syria. The committee also visited the Syrian Foreign Ministry for consultations with officials concerned with human rights.

The last leg of the committee's tour will be a visit to Egypt after which they are expected to fly to Geneva to submit a report to the U.N. General Assembly.

Crown Prince chairs WAJ meeting to review water policies, supply

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent Wednesday called for the formulation of a national plan for water in Jordan until the year 2000 and stressed the importance of providing piped drinking water to all citizens in the Kingdom.

Prince Hassan, who was chairing an expanded meeting at the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) to discuss water policy in Jordan, referred to the need for planning land-use systems and means to exploit water for industry and agriculture.

The Crown Prince also outlined the need to distribute development gains and pointed out that water should not be channelled from rural areas to cities. Water, he added, contributes to the development of rural areas.

WAJ President Mohammad

Saleh Al Keilani talked about the basic principles of the authority's policy, pointing out that this policy aims to supply water to each citizen living in a population gathering of more than 500 people by the end of this year.

He also affirmed that the Kingdom's main cities, municipalities and villages will be included in the sewerage projects and waste water treatment plants and that each population gathering of more than 2,500 people will be serviced with sewerage projects in the next stage of the WAJ plan.

The WAJ is currently studying setting up a national line to transport water from Qa' Al Disi in the south to Al Mukheiba in the north to guarantee flexibility in supplying citizens with drinking water and also for use in agriculture and industry, Mr. Keilani

said.

He added that the authority is gradually lifting a ban on the drilling of wells in some areas and that the WAJ has adopted intensive quality control techniques which are applied in the north, south and the southern regions. Mr. Keilani also pointed out that the WAJ has drawn up a proposed water policy for the country until the year 2000 and that this policy has been referred to the cabinet for approval.

Taking part in the discussions on water policy in Jordan were Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Hisham Al Khatib, Minister of Planning Abdullah Nsour, Minister of Agriculture Ahmad Dakqan, Ministry of Agriculture Under-Secretary Salem Al Lawzi and senior WAJ officials.

Man shoots JVA president in office Haddadin in 'stable' condition after attempt on his life

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) President Munther Haddadin, who Tuesday escaped an attempt on his life, is now under intensive care treatment at Al Hussein Medical Centre.

A medical source told the Jordan Times that Dr. Haddadin's condition is "stable" after he had undergone a series of surgical operations. The source said that Dr. Haddadin would have to stay in the intensive care unit for some time until he recovers.

Dr. Haddadin was shot at by a citizen in the Jordan Valley following a heated argument over the distribution of land near South Shuneh. A report in the local press said that as Dr. Haddadin was discussing a number of land issues with his deputy Fahd Al Natour, a man identified by the police as 35-year old A.T.A. entered the office and immediately began to discuss an issue related to the ownership of land in the area. The

man later produced a revolver and fired on Dr. Haddadin wounding him in the shoulder and the waist before escaping, the report said.

Dr. Haddadin was rushed first to the health centre at South Shuneh, then to Al Salt Government Hospital. He was later taken by helicopter to Al Hussein Medical City where an operation was carried out and the bullets removed from his body.

Interior Minister Hassan Al Kayed called on Dr. Haddadin in hospital and reported later that he was out of danger. He said that a special investigation team has gone to the Jordan Valley to begin enquiries and that the search for the assailant was still going on.

Foundation honours Arab scientists

AMMAN (J.T.) — Thirteen Arab scientists Wednesday won the 1984 Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation prizes for research in pure sciences, humanities, agriculture, biology, medicine, pharmacy and engineering.

At the beginning of the prize-giving ceremony, chairman of the foundation's board of directors Abdul Majid Shoman, delivered a speech in which he said that this occasion embodies the hopes and ambitions of the late Abdul Hamid Shoman for a better future for the Arab World. Mr. Shoman congratulated the winners and expressed hope that the token prizes would boost efforts in their research.

In his speech, the foundation's director general As'ad Abdul Rahman said that the foundation would continue with its charitable steps for the benefit of the Arab nation.

In an interview with the Jordan Times, Dr. Najwa Bulos, a Jordanian who together with other two scientists won the prize for clinical sciences, said that although she has been honoured several times in many fields, this is the first time she has received a prize which prompts her to further achievements.

Speaking of the obstacles facing local researchers, Dr. Bulos cited the lack of scientific references and a lack of facilities, especially laboratories.

Villagers kill wolf following more attacks

TAFLEH (J.T.) — Six more people have been injured by a fierce wolf which attacked Basreh town near Tafleh on Monday. The wolf had on the previous nights made other attacks and injured four other people as reported in the Jordan Times Wednesday.

A report in the Al Ra'i Arabic daily newspaper Wednesday said that the townspeople were able to kill the wolf late in the night during yet another attack. Six of the injured people have been taken to a local health centre and then to hospital for treatment.

According to health director in Karak, Baker Harasis, the condition of the injured person is satisfactory and all of them have been given anti-rabies vaccines.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Majali stands in as defence minister

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree has been issued appointing Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Wahab Al Majali as Minister of Defence in the absence of Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Zaid Rifai.

Lawzi, Fayeze receive Omani envoy

AMMAN (Petra) — Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi Wednesday received Omani Ambassador in Amman Abdullah Said Al Balloushi on the occasion of the end of his term of office to Jordan. Mr. Lawzi praised Mr. Balloushi's efforts in serving the strong bilateral relations between the two countries. Lower House of Parliament Speaker Akref Al Fayeze, who also received Mr. Balloushi Wednesday, paid tribute to Mr. Balloushi's efforts to promote the existing relations between Jordan and Oman.

JMC discusses amendment to law

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Medical Council (JMC), during a session held Wednesday under the chairmanship of JMC President and Minister of Health Zaid Hamzeh, discussed a number of topics including a proposed amendment to the JMC law.

SPECIAL OFFER



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Marriott
HOTEL

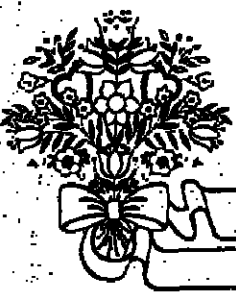


فندق
ماريوت
عمان

Al - Hussein Society
for the Rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped
and the Amman Marriott Hotel

would like to thank
all those who generously donated
money to Al - Hussein Society by
attending our Fun Train Ride to
Daba'a on Friday, May 10th.1985.

Your donation is very much appreciated.





Problem repeats itself

THE FIGHTING that has been raging in and around the three Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut over the past several days is a measure of yet another negative development in the state of inter-Arab affairs. But more than that, and more importantly perhaps, it highlights the continuing displacement and homelessness of the Palestinian people. Unless and until the Palestinian problem is solved, it will always be a source of strife and instability in this region of the world. You can have a thousand aspects to the conflict in the Middle East. But the central issue will always remain that of whether we Arabs and the rest of the world, including Israel, can address the Palestinian problem and find a just and lasting solution for it.

This week's fighting in Beirut was by no means instigated by the fighters defending the refugee camps of Bourj Al Barajneh, Sabra and Shatila. The spark that would have ignited any battle in Lebanon was never put out, neither by the Israeli invasion nor by the shifting balance of power among the Lebanese factions themselves. All ingredients for continued strife remained where they were before 1982, except for the power adjustments that we have all seen taking place since then.

Some Palestinian fighters had returned to the refugee camps not now but sometime back. So it is not true that Amal militiamen somehow intercepted an armed Palestinian group last Sunday and decided to stop the fighters' return then. In all likelihood, Amal has decided to be the only major force in west Beirut and the ongoing battles for the refugee camps are but the manifestation of the decision it has taken to enforce its political standing among the Lebanese.

Granted that the situation among the Palestinian groups who are battling Amal is less clear. But more evident is the new-found unity among them, and other Lebanese groups, to resist Shi'ite hegemony and Amal's domination of west Beirut. Remember that political power in Lebanon is always proportionate to what you have on the ground and how many men you have.

The Syrian role in all of this is also as yet unclear. But Amal is taking maximum advantage of the Damascus regime's vagueness on the fighting, although many of the refugee camps' defenders are Syrian-backed elements and groups.

What happens in Lebanon next is a matter for speculation. But no matter what happens the Palestinians will figure high in it and their struggle will persist. Not only Lebanon but also the whole area will remain fragile and explosive as long as their problem remains unsolved.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i: King's visit helps peace

KING HUSSEIN ended a visit to Cairo Tuesday and left for London on his way to the United States for talks with President Reagan on Middle East issues. The King's visit to the United States is also seen as another step in joint Jordanian-PLO moves towards the achievement of peace in the region and ending Zionist plans against the Palestinians and their homeland. The visit and talks with U.S. officials could well be the beginning of the end of the Middle East issue and might be construed as the last effort that could be made to resolve the issue through U.S. help and mediation.

Before the King's visit, the Middle East saw U.S. envoy Richard Murphy and Secretary of State George Shultz coming here and talking about the issue, and no doubt, all these contacts must have by now paved the way for a very serious talk between the King and President Reagan in Washington in the coming week. The U.S., which is the strongest ally of Israel, now holds the chance to establish a genuine peace in our region, now that the Arabs have extended a hand towards it.

Al Dustour: Shi'ite attack condemned

WE CONDEMN the Shi'ite attack on Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut and consider it as an extension of Israel's task to remove the Palestinians and their presence from the Lebanese capital for good. The attack is a carbon copy of that one carried out by the Zionists during their invasion of Lebanon three years ago and in collaboration with the Falangist militia.

One cannot explain the reason behind this attack by groups which pretended to be friends to the Palestinians all this time. The Shi'ites, which have suffered a great deal at the hands of the Israelis, should turn their guns towards the common enemy rather than killing the Palestinian refugees in their camps, the scene of earlier massacres. The Israelis are still occupying southern Lebanon and the Shi'ites are busy themselves with criminal actions against the innocent people of the camps in Beirut. This attack on the camps can be regarded as a complimentary action to that started by Israel three years ago.

Sawt Al Shaab: Why attack Beirut defenders?

DESPITE THE high price which the Palestinians had paid to defend Beirut during the Israeli invasion of 1982, some extremist groups are now intent on liquidating Palestinian presence in Lebanon. The situation at the moment is far dangerous than it was during the civil war in Lebanon, because as the Israelis are moving out of the country, the warring factions are involved in liquidating one another.

The Shi'ites, which earlier attacked the Sunnis and liquidated the Murabitoun forces, now turned their attention to the Palestinians, and tomorrow, who knows what group they will be fighting against. Liquidating the various small groups in Lebanon can by no means restore peace and security to Lebanon nor can it ever bring about national reconciliation in the country.

The presence of Palestinian camps in Lebanon does not stand in the way of the Shi'ites if they genuinely desire to re-unite Lebanon as they claim, and the killing of innocent women and children like the Israelis did in 1982 can never help the Shi'ites achieve their goals.

VIEW FROM AMERICA

Americans now want Mideast reconciliation

SAN FRANCISCO — Just recently a survey was done by the highly-respected Survey Research Centre of the University of Michigan on American attitudes toward the Middle East. The findings were quite surprising and Middle Eastern readers should be aware of them.

Five main attitudes emerged in the findings:

(1) Fifty-five per cent of the respondents think that peace in the Middle East will only come when the Palestinians have a state of their own on the West Bank.

(2) Seventy per cent believe that U.S. policy should be evenhanded as between Arabs and Israelis.

(3) A majority of respondents thinks that present levels of aid to Israel and Egypt are too high.

(4) Most respondents believe the U.S. should take part in an international conference to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict.

(5) King Hussein of Jordan has the highest favourable rating of Middle East leaders followed, equally, by Prime Minister Peres of Israel, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, and President Mubarak of Egypt. The PLO and Chairman Arafat rank low.

Survey data is difficult to interpret, as any sociologist knows. Nevertheless, there is a lot of data to indicate that since Israel's invasion of Lebanon in June 1982, attitudes of the U.S. public towards Israel and the Palestinians have changed. What had been a consistently positive view of Israel began to turn negative with more and more people.

The dominant sense Americans have of the Middle East

is that it is a "hot spot." People are afraid a war could erupt in the Middle East which could spark an even bigger war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. That fear has been growing ever since the oil crisis over a decade ago.

But what is significant is that the U.S. public no longer sees the trouble as mainly due to aggressive Arabs or Soviet interference. It has now come to see the dispute for what it really is: "a conflict between two peoples for the same stretch of territory." And the view now is that some sort of partition may be the only way to settle the conflict.

American politicians are always aware of public opinion. Their electoral careers depend on it. American policy-makers are a little more insulated from poll data, but they do know what the public thinks. So no

matter how non-evenhanded the U.S. Congress and the Reagan administration may appear at times, they know that there is very little support in the U.S. for a policy that makes Israel the top strategic ally of the U.S. in the region.

At the moment, media attention has been taken away from the Middle East. The controversy over the Balfour cemetery visit in Germany, of course, indirectly involved Middle East policy, but the media hardly even hinted at that. Central America again is in the daily headlines. Reports appear routinely of the killings in Lebanon, but, unfortunately, they cause hardly a ripple. TV almost never carries live coverage of the bloodshed, perhaps because the TV reporters are gone from Beirut, but also because the U.S. public would rather not see what is going on.

The lack of media attention would have been good news for Middle East peace prospects except that the German cemetery controversy probably forced the Reagan policy-makers to be more cautious than ever about their moves involving Israel and Jewish affairs.

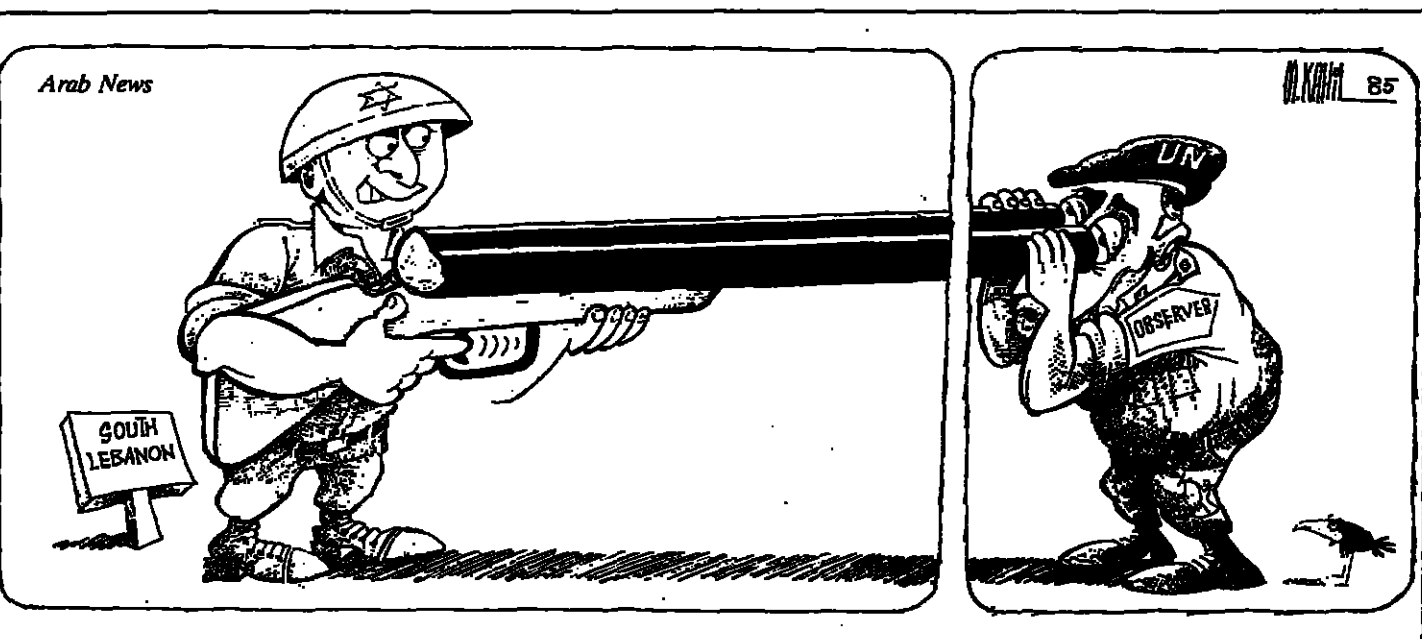
Will the U.S. (and of course Israel) agree to talk to a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation? Clearly the public is not that interested in technical diplomatic issues. But the results of the University of Michigan poll indicate that most Americans would welcome such a move if it could lead to peace in the Middle East.

If the U.S. government makes the first move and agrees to receive such a delegation, that will be major pressure on Israel to do likewise. The chances of Israel doing it

first would seem remote. But the history of diplomacy is full of surprises and here too we could see some new twists and turns in the weeks and months ahead.

The issue of land on the West Bank is paramount. Palestinians have been robbed of their land for decades now, under one pretext or another. There can be no peace until the land issue is settled with justice for Palestinians. That means Palestinians now living in and outside the borders of Israeli-occupied Palestine. Palestinians are a nation. So are Israelis whose trans-border adherents are people called Zionists.

Can two nations live on the same stretch of land? Nationalists in both camps say no. Idealists would say yes. The general attitude of the American public is that there has to be a yes answer.



Former Spanish prime minister says he is poised for a comeback

By Brian Mooney
Reuter

MADRID — After four years of waiting in the wings since his resignation as post-Franco Spain's first democratically-elected prime minister, Adolfo Suarez says he is poised for a comeback.

New opinion polls show that Mr. Suarez, Democratic and Social Centre (CDS) is now Spain's third most popular party and, although not within reach of power, it is expected to make big gains in next year's general elections.

Such expectations are impressive for a party that has just two deputies in parliament — Mr. Suarez, known popularly as "El Dugué" for the dukedom granted by King Juan Carlos, and former Industry and Defence Minister Agustín Rodríguez Sahagún.

Forecasts that CDS could win more than 20 seats reflect the political shifts in a country adjusting to prospects of a long rule by the Socialists and the attractions of Mr. Suarez himself.

Mr. Suarez, 52, is highly respected as one of the chief architects of the peaceful transition to democracy following the death in 1975 of dictator General Francisco Franco.

Developments since Felipe Gonzalez led his Socialist Party to victory in general elections in October 1982 have added to Mr. Suarez's standing and popularity.

Mr. Suarez has profited from intrigues on the right, where the main Popular Alliance (AP) opposition party of former Franco minister Manuel Fraga seems to



have failed to take hold as a realistic challenger to the Socialists.

Mr. Suarez has also benefitted from Mr. Gonzalez's about-turn in favour of membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and from his severe economic policies, both of which have disenchanted the left.

He has even accused Mr. Gonzalez of moving to the right of him.

The former prime minister, a populist and to an extent an enigma, has nevertheless avoided a frontal assault on Mr. Gonzalez.

Mr. Suarez's restraint derives from a charm and ease of character that mark him out from Mr. Fraga, who is regarded by many as too abrasive and extreme to stand any chance of wresting power from the moderate Gonzalez.

The opinion polls show that all

attempts to build an alternative conservative party around personalities other than Mr. Suarez have failed to stir any popular enthusiasm.

Mr. Suarez is the key to the centre and he says he is determined to keep a hold of it himself to avoid a repetition of the break-up of his Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD), with which he ruled from 1976 until his surprise resignation in 1981.

The collapse of the UCD, which returned to parliament in 1982 with just 12 of its 168 outgoing deputies, led politicians to believe that Spain had entered a new two-party era.

They predicted a future with power alternating between the Socialists and the Popular Alliance, which won 202 and 106 seats respectively in the 350-seat chamber.

Mr. Suarez insisted there was still room for centre parties in Spain and says he will prove his point at the next elections, which must be held by the end of 1986.

The latest surveys — which show that Mr. Suarez's party, with only meagre resources, has broken through the five-per-cent barrier for the first time — have made people sit up and take heed of his warnings.

One poll in El Pais newspaper gave the CDS 5.3 per cent of the vote compared to 4.4 per cent for the traditionally strong Communist Party and a low 1.3 per cent for Mr. Fraga's party.

The Socialists were well ahead with more than 40 per cent.

If present trends continue, the

Socialists will win the next elections comfortably. What is still to be determined is how the non-left opposition will divide the spoils.

Mr. Suarez has kept his party alive with a combination of old fashioned barn-storming — he takes to the road most weekends to visit a different part of the country — and the lure of his own name.

He has maintained a high profile abroad, even travelling with Mr. Gonzalez to Latin America to attend state functions.

His party, which has only 8,500 paid up members, is saddled with debts exceeding 300 million pesetas (\$1.7 million).

But in an interview with the magazine Cambio 16, Mr. Suarez argued that the hard times were over for the party which he founded in 1982, three weeks before the October elections.

"In 1982 we were operating below minimum... we had no credibility, no image, nothing," he said.

He calls his party social democratic, radical and reformist and says he wants to level enormous inequalities that still predominate in Spain.

In a rare comment on the reasons for his resignation in 1981, Mr. Suarez told Cambio that at one stage 14 people were struggling inside the UCD to become prime minister.

Most Spaniards believe that the full story behind Mr. Suarez's resignation has not been told. It came less than four weeks before an abortive coup.

Senegal: Something of an African oddity

By Claude Regis
Reuter

DAKAR — On a continent where one-party or authoritarian military regimes are usually the rule, the West African nation of Senegal is something of an oddity.

It is West Africa's only multiparty parliamentary democracy, with an active political scene and a lively and free opposition press.

The system has been tried and failed elsewhere in Africa but President Abdou Diouf says it works in Senegal where there are regular and free elections.

"As long as I am in power, democracy will be preserved and I hope my successor will have the same attitude," he told Reuters in an interview.

The main opposition grouping, the left-of-centre Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS), disagrees, says the government is becoming increasingly authoritarian and charges that the ruling Socialist Party has clung to power since independence from France in 1960 by massive elec-

tion rigging.

PDS leader Abdoulaye Wade, a French-trained lawyer and economist, has launched a campaign of political harassment.

Mr. Wade says the 59-year-old president is to blame for Senegal's deep economic recession, a dramatic slump in living standards and alleged corruption in high circles.

He has called for a coalition government to pull Senegal out of its difficulties and rule until early general elections.

He says the last presidential and legislative polls in 1983 — for five-year terms — were so fraudulent as to be meaningless. "If free and fair elections were held today, the Socialists would be swept out of power," he told Reuters.

He has called on his supporters to pray every Tuesday in mosques and churches for the fall of the regime.

Government officials accuse him of playing dangerously on religious feelings in a country where Muslim fundamentalism is gaining

ground.

In another controversial move, he urged his followers to boycott ceremonies marking Senegal's 25th independence anniversary last month.

"By his behaviour in opposition Wade has shown that if he were to rule, the country would be far less democratic," Mr. Diouf told Reuters, dismissing as a gimmick Mr. Wade's call for a coalition government.

Mr. Diouf said he had received an overwhelming popular mandate in the 1983 poll which he would see through to the end. Mr. Diouf, then prime minister, took over from poet-President Leopold Senghor when he retired in December 1981 after 20 years' rule.

In his first test at the polls in February 1983, the tall, boyish-looking technocrat won more than 80 per cent of votes.

Socialist Party candidates took 111 of the 120 national assembly seats. The PDS got eight and a far-left group got one.

Six of 13 opposition parties boycotted the polls saying they

were undemocratic and to protest against the voting system which banned coalitions.

Mr. Diouf said the polls were fair and the opposition had tried to sabotage them by forcing voters to stay away.

Their negative attitude after the polls — they strongly contested the results — meant he could not call on opposition leaders to form part of his government, he said.

He added that some of the Socialist Party's old guard thought he was "too democratic" and had criticised him for giving top ministerial jobs to non-party members.

Shortly after taking power Mr. Diouf threw open the political arena, allowing any number of political parties. There are now 14 legally recognised groups ranging from far left to liberal, compared to four under Senghor.

The decision was hailed by some as a proof of democracy but Mr. Wade said it was intended to divide the opposition while giving Senegal a positive image abroad.

Philippines disorder alarms Washington

A decade after the fall of Saigon, Washington is increasingly concerned by developments in the Philippines. But trying to balance strategic interests with desires for political reform is proving difficult. Chris Sherwell, recently in Manila, reports.

As Americans ponder increased U.S. involvement in Nicaragua and reflect on their defeat in Vietnam 10 years ago, fresh dilemmas are being posed in a third country involving vital U.S. interests — the Philippines.

President Ferdinand Marcos, a loyal friend to Washington, who has ruled this former U.S. colony for 20 years, is at 67 in erratic health and without an obvious successor. The economy is weak, and the military's alleged involvement in the assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino has exposed him to attack.

Communist-inspired insurgency is meanwhile spreading relentlessly. In Washington's eyes, a slow descent into disorder can only be reversed through fundamental economic and political reforms.

But the question remains of how far the Reagan administration should go — or can go — in encouraging such changes, given the Philippines' overwhelming strategic importance.

The U.S.'s two largest military facilities outside America — Clark air base and Subic naval base — lie in the Philippines. From here the U.S. has access to the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean, and control of the sea lanes linking Japan to the Gulf.

To Washington, this strategic position has looked increasingly important ever since the Soviet Union, following U.S.'s Cuban blockade 23 years ago, began building up its global naval power. But it has become critical since Moscow's major success in 1979 in securing access to the former U.S. naval base at Cam Ranh Bay and to Da Nang air base in southern Vietnam.

Because the U.S. has no wish to jeopardise its own position, its latitude in influencing President

Marcos is limited, as the wily leader knows. Washington already admits to serious concern both over opposition calls for a removal of the bases and over the growing strength of the guerrilla insurgents, and has even begun considering alternative bases, should revolution suddenly overtake the Philippines.

For the moment opposition demands are blunted by disunity over the bases issue and over their more general strategy for removing Mr. Marcos. As long as they are unable to form a solid or credible alternative government, they appear to pose no threat. But the loss of a non-violent alternative would itself be risky, which is why the U.S. administration stays closely in touch with opposition figures as well as the Marcos government.

The insurgency is a different matter. The New People's Army (NPA), the military wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, is estimated to have between 10,000 and 12,000 armed members and, according to U.S. Defence Department figures, perhaps as many as 15,000. The Communist Party itself is said to have 60,000 members.

The public manifestation of these underground forces is the National Democratic Front, an alliance of left-wing opposition groups which is widely believed to be under the ultimate control of the Communist Party. It is said to have 100,000 members.

The greatest penetration is in Mindanao, the country's largest island, in the south. But the NPA is also active in Luzon, Samar, Leyte and Negros. Incidents last year occurred at the rate of 10 a day, the bulk of them initiated by the NPA.

— Financial Times news feature.

LETTERS

I did free service too

To the Editor:

AFTER READING the story headlined "Lebanese militiamen grab foreign workers to do their dirty job" (Jordan Times Tuesday, May 21), I feel an urge to publicise an experience I myself had in Beirut some years ago. But it was not on the hands of militiamen on the western side of the Lebanese capital.

It was in February 1980 that I had a chance to visit Beirut for a short visit which lasted three days. The evening before I was to leave Lebanon, I went shopping in the shattered marketplace (Al Bourj) and suddenly found myself looking at the barrel of an AK-47 machinegun wielded by a gruff-looking man wearing green battle fatigues. My knowledge of Arabic was limited, but it needed no explanation that the man wanted me to accompany him.

I had no choice, of course, than to obey him, and in a matter of about 20 minutes, I found myself in a militia "barracks" on the second floor of a shabby apartment. I thought I was to be interrogated as to what connections I had with the fighting factions, but it turned out that the first thing my captors told me was to make tea for them.

In a matter of three days, I graduated from making tea to preparing meals for the militiamen, and by the end of the first week, I was one of the "chefs" among a collection of Egyptians, Pakistanis, Indians and Filipinos. The militiamen said they "really" liked my cooking and that itself proved a big obstacle letting me go.

When I was not preparing meals, I was asked to fill sandbags and clean guns (minus ammunition of course) of the Katayeb (Falangists) as they used to call themselves.

Ultimately, I managed to win the confidence of some of the gunmen, and it was during a shopping trip to the market that I managed to make good my escape by sneaking into a garbage van (East Beirut's inevitably dump their garbage in the western side). I made my way from the garbage dump to my embassy and managed to retrieve my things from the hotel where I was staying before my "employment" by the Katayeb.

Add insult to injury! I had to sell some of my things to pay off the hotel for the 23 days I was "staying there", while in fact I was cooking for the militiamen before the hotel would return some of my valuable documents.

I left Beirut the very next day and never went back.

Name withheld upon request

Ships: Sometimes big is by no means beautiful

As ships get bigger, it seems the industry's problems do the same. Now, the container sector is experiencing difficulty; next, it could be the turn of cruise ships to plough through stormy waters. Andrew Fisher explains.

LONDON — As ships get bigger, it seems, so the industry's problems increase. This time round, it is the turn of the container shipping sector. Next could be the cruise ships. In past years, the tanker, gas, and bulk cargo markets have all suffered from the complications of size.

It may not be the ideal background for the launching of the new freight futures contract on London's Baltic Exchange. But the intention is to protect those in the industry against fluctuations in rates, and these can occur in slack as well as boom times, though less sensationally.

Shipping is an industry in which crisis, at least in the last few years, has become almost a way of life. True, it is not just the size of individual ships which is the problem. Last year brought a welcome rise in cargo volumes for a number of routes and cargoes, notably serving the U.S. economy, world steelmakers, and Soviet grain importers. But many of the benefits were nullified by overcapacity.

Thus, despite the extra business, most freight rates stuck fast

to their previous levels or fell back after edging up for a few months. Despite steady scrapping, and ever more vocal attempts to promote this brutal method of ending the surplus, there is still far too much tanker and bulk tonnage about.

More and more ships are still being delivered, though the age of the big tanker is now clearly over. Some 500 of these still exist — in mid-1981 there were 700 — but such vessels are the prime candidates for scrapping. It is the amount of bulk tonnage being delivered which has kept down freight rates for commodities like iron ore, coal and grain.

A rough balance between supply and demand should be struck in about a couple of years. But it is this very period which is expected, to see a real battle of the giants in container shipping on liner (scheduled cargo) routes. The reason is the billion dollar plunge on new ships, containers and other equipment by Evergreen of Taiwan, closely followed by United States Lines.

So, drama will certainly not be

in short supply in liner shipping. Already, over-tonnage is put at around 20 per cent. When the new vessels of Evergreen, U.S. Lines and others are all in service, it is likely to be twice this. Both Evergreen, headed by ex-seafarer Mr. Y. F. Chang, and U.S. Lines, run by Mr. Malcolm McLean, intend to stamp their mark on the industry with round-the-world services.

Lines in all countries are worried. Mr. Kimio Miyazaki, president of Nippon Yusen Kaisha, a major Japanese shipping company, said the crisis facing his country's industry was critical. "During a chronic glut of both tanker and dry cargo vessels, the shipping industry is experiencing an upheaval — particularly in liner services."

For over four years, he added, the liner, the tramp (ships available for hire anywhere), and tanker services had been in simultaneous depression. "There is virtually no prospect as yet of emerging from this structural decline."

He could well have extended his lament to shipbuilding, also struggling to deal with the problems of too much capacity. Much recent orderbook has occurred because of low prices offered by yards, mostly in the Far East, to fill their dep-

leted order books.

Having done this, South Korean and Japanese yards are still having trouble finding enough new work. Japan, the world's leader, has cut capacity after the rapid growth which preceded the 1970s oil crisis, and ended the boom in big tankers.

In Europe, where the industry is a shadow of its former world-dominating self, much capacity has also been shed and subsidies are mostly needed to match the price gap with Asia. Such a situation can easily fray tempers. Mr. Graham Day, the chairman of state-owned British Shipbuilders, has said he dreams of the day when China overhauls Korea as the world's lowest cost, volume shipbuilder.

Not all shipbuilders have gone through quite the traumas that yards in Britain have. Sweden has cut back sharply, but the surviving Kockums yard is a highly efficient builder of cargo ships — it built three big combined container and roll-on/roll-off vessels for the Atlantic Container Line (ACL) consortium — and has moved into cruise vessels.

Making money out of complex passenger vessels is not easy. Some European yards, especially in West Germany, have lost head-

vily. But there are some big orders coming up. Wartsila of Finland, a highly specialised company which also builds cargo and ice-breaking ships for the Soviet Union, is strongly placed to win some of these.

Passenger shipping, with cruising up at the glamour end, is what the industry means to most non-maritime people, a reminder of the days when the sea was the means of long-distance travel. Today, the sector ranges from hovercraft through ferries with varying standards of comfort to luxury liners.

Nonetheless, cruise ships are a very small part of the world shipping market, though a highly visible one. Britain's P. & O. group, with stakes in container, gas and bulk shipping, also has a cruise ship fleet, to which the newest addition is the Wartsila-built Royal Princess costing over \$150 million.

Operating from the U.S. coast, she is reported to be doing well. But earning money after financing costs will not necessarily be easy. Other companies' Caribbean-based cruise fleets are also being expanded. One Norwegian line pondered a huge 5,000 passenger ship for the U.S. market, but is settling for one half the capacity.

Over-capacity, the shipowners' familiar *cri de coeur* is not a fear confined to cargo shipping, therefore. Nor is the cruise market one that European shipbuilders can cheerfully claim for themselves. Japanese yards, with plenty of skills in building sophisticated cargo ships, would love to make inroads into the passenger market.

Japan certainly has no illusions about the shipbuilding as a growth industry. Both the government and the companies involved are contemplating its future. They are also considering whether to join forces with the promoters of more world scrapping facilities. Taiwan has the most — so as to try to bring about a better tonnage balance.

Whether or not this is achieved, or even approached, bankers will be among the most concerned observers. Loans to the shipping industry total some \$50 billion, and much of it must be at risk in the industry's current vulnerable state. Banks have tried to nurse clients through hard times. But they have also turned off the life support systems of some shipowners. There are bound to be more terminal cases. — Financial Times news feature.

Randa Habib's Corner

More than making money selling fuel

IN MOST countries of the world, petrol stations are usually the most conspicuous thing. They are situated on crossroads and junctions of main streets for all drivers to see. Sometimes, there is one petrol station every few hundred yards. Sometimes there are two, three or four opposite or very close to each other.

Unfortunately, this is not the case in Jordan. Either because land is so expensive or because there is no competition to the oil refinery's monopoly of petrol sales, our "gas" stations are most likely situated on side streets and narrow alleys where it is very difficult to see one if you do not know the turf.

There are not even signs to indicate directions for petrol stations for those drivers, with empty tanks, who do not know the area. In this case, the only solution for the poor driver is to find a helpful passerby or a fellow driver who would point to him the right location.

Generally speaking, the increase in the number of petrol stations has not matched the continuing increase in the number of cars. But this is only one aspect of the problem. The other, more important, problem is the lack of adequate services which our petrol stations offer. Most gas stations in Jordan look terribly run down and hardly any is equipped to handle cars that have just broken down, even for a most minor reason. Air pressure gauges virtually do not exist, and when they do, you can bet their system never works. Attitudes of gas pump attendants are not always friendly, because the guys working there simply do not care. Competition is lacking. Why should anybody care?

Might the government think about the poor state of our petrol stations? Might it do something about it? We do not really know. Perhaps there are other more important subjects to think about.

Istanbul's two ferries to go to rest

By Ragıp Erten
Rauzer

ISTANBUL — Two elegant steamship ferries, still plying the Bosphorus waters between Asia and Europe after 75 years, will soon reach the end of their long commuter run.

Set long in the water, griddled with lifebuoys and with their thickly-varnished wooden superstructures catching the morning sun, the ships take commuters across this city every day from one continent to the other and back home again at night.

Now, says Sadik Hosgor, commuter lines director for the state-owned Turkish Maritime Corporation, it has become impossible to get spare parts for their coal-fired engines.

And these days the romance and nostalgia of black clouds billowing from their soot-caked smokestacks is lost on environmentalists more concerned with air pollution.

The two ferry boats, Kucuksu — better known as Number 64 to long-time commuters — and Guzelhisar, have been plying the commuter run since as far back as World War I.

Kucuksu was built in France in 1910 and Guzelhisar in Britain a year later.

Mr. Hosgor says he has four other coal-fired steamships dating back to 1949 and 15 fuel-oil burning vessels still operating in his 50 ship commuter fleet.

The number of coal-burning ships was cut from 18 to six five years ago because of their small capacities and low speed.

"In terms of operating costs,

coal ships are less expensive but maintaining them is a problem. Also they cause sea and air pollution," he said in an interview.

While newly-built diesel commuter ships can carry up to 2,000 passengers, Kucuksu's limit is less than half of that.

The commuter lines agency began operating in Istanbul in 1854 with six British-built steamships. Today it carries around 300,000 commuters each day from one continent to the other, with over 800 journeys from dawn to midnight.

The agency also owns 21 car ferries operating between the Asian and European sides both on the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits, seven of them with fuel-oil burning steam engines.

The popularity of car ferries dropped following the 1973 construction of a bridge over the Bosphorus, which links the two parts of Istanbul by road.

"But with the increase in the number of cars and the time lost in traffic jams over the bridge, a lot of motorists are using the car ferries again," Mr. Hosgor said.

The four other 1910-vintage commuter ships were in service until last year.

"Now they are moored at a shipyard awaiting their fate... I sincerely wish I had the resources to be able to turn them into floating museums," Mr. Hosgor added.

Many Istanbul dwellers, nostalgic for the city's past glories, hope private owners can keep souvenirs of the old technology afloat — even if the state cannot. In previous years, two entrepreneurs each bought 1910 vintage ships, converting them into combined night clubs and restaurants to tour the Bosphorus.

One of them, Bogazici, was destroyed by fire last autumn just after passengers left it at the end of a full-moon tour.

Worry hits English city along with deadly disease

By Larry Thorson
Associated Press

STAFFORD, England — For a month, Stafford has been struggling with a disease. At first it was thought to be an unknown strain of influenza, then it was diagnosed as the virulent Legionnaires disease, one of the new scourges of the air-conditioned era.

The illness had claimed 36 lives by Friday, giving the highest known death toll in any Legionnaires outbreak, and 163 people had been hospitalised since the first cases in mid-April. "The Staffordshire outbreak ... is a very serious outbreak, and is a

sort of epidemic," Dr. John MacFarlane, one of Britain's specialists in the disease, said in describing the impact of the illness on the central England county of Staffordshire, which has a population of about one million.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's government has ordered a public inquiry into the Staffordshire outbreak and how to prevent the disease.

Stafford, the county seat with a population of about 60,000, has become something of a leper as some people shunned the area, even though the disease is not contagious.

Tourism is a bit lower than expected, said Elizabeth Jeffreys, secretary of the North Staffordshire Tourist Association.

"I'd be lying if I said we hadn't had any cancellations. But the number has been very small," she said. "Our business is up from last year, but we've had a few cancellations because people are anxious."

Michael Poulter, chairman of the county council social service committee, said he was angry about the high concern and alarm which seems to be felt in the rest of the country.

"We're very concerned, but we're not panicking," he said. Poulter said he believes the health

authorities have eliminated the source of the disease, and that the wider public will soon understand that it cannot be transmitted from person to person.

"It may be that some in the rest of the country consider Stafford a bit of a leper now, but certainly we in Stafford don't consider ourselves lepers," he said.

Perhaps the worst aspect of the outbreak aside from the many deaths was that it apparently started in a hospital only two years old, the showpiece 20-million-pound (\$25-million) Stafford District General Hospital.

The irony that people should die as a result of going somewhere to be healed is almost beyond

comprehension." Editor Peter Atkins wrote in his column in the weekly Stafford Newsletter.

One man came down with the disease after having spent 35 minutes at the hospital's outpatient clinic accompanying his wife to the doctor.

"The source may never be known," Jim Bartlett, general manager of the mid-Staffordshire Health Authority, said on Friday. "It may never be proved in the sense that there is firm forensic evidence to show it was there by means of laboratory tests."

"People who do not turn up for follow-up appointments could be putting themselves at major risk," Dr. Peter Daggett said.



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AMMAN JORDAN

National basketball team plays U.S. 'Spartans' today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The national basketball team will meet an American University squad in a friendly match to be played at the Sports City Stadium today at 9 p.m.

The American team, "Spartans" from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, is one of the reputed university players in the U.S., having scored 17 victories in 25 games played last season.

Today's game is one of three exhibition matches to be played by the national team and the Americans. On May 27 they will play a match in Yarmouk University, Irbid, and come back to Amman

to play another game on May 29 at the Sports City.

The U.S. team, which arrived in Amman Tuesday night on a 10-day visit to Jordan, includes 12 players and their head coach Bill Sudeck and trainer Dennis Bash in addition to Peter Musselman, vice-president of Case Western Reserve University.

The Spartans' visit to Jordan is sponsored by the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) in cooperation with the Basketball Federation of Jordan and arranged through the USIA's Sports America office. The arrangements for the tour was assisted by Robert "Rip" Taylor, who has trained the Jordanian national team for the past two years.

Jordan's junior basketball team trained at Case Western Reserve University last year while the national team was playing in the 1984 Olympics at Los Angeles.

Case Western Reserve University is regarded as one of America's leading independent universities. Through its two undergraduate colleges, school of graduate studies, and seven professional schools, the university offers education in 60 fields.

During the current academic

year, the university's 8,544 students came from all 50 American states and 86 nations including nearly every country in the Middle East and North Africa. "About 11 per cent of our students are from abroad," said Mr. Musselman.

About 5,000 of the university's students are in the graduate or professional schools of applied social sciences, dentistry, medicine, law, management, information and library sciences, and nursing. The campus is six kilometres from downtown Cleveland.

The Spartans achieved their best record under coach Bill Sudeck the past season, winning 17 games and losing nine. The team competes principally in the North Coast Athletic Conference.



The Spartans and their coach Bill Sudeck (back left) who will play Jordan's national basketball team Thursday at the Sports City Stadium.

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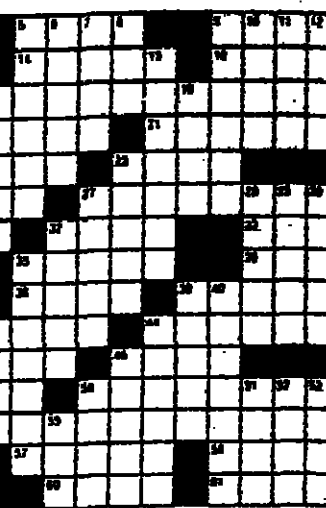
THE Daily Crossword by Louis Sabin

ACROSS

- 1 Peak
- 5 Apportion
- 9 Creep
- 13 Frangible soil
- 14 Fragrant wood
- 16 Salsan
- 17 Big name in boxing
- 20 Views
- 21 Edges
- 22 "Three art — easy to parody"
- 23 Instance
- 24 Hoffman of Hollywood
- 27 Keep in mind
- 31 Single
- 32 Middleweight champion once
- 33 Ring filler
- 34 — rule (generally)
- 35 Relative
- 37 Politician: abbr.
- 38 — Chinese abbr.
- 39 Durrat's land
- 41 Wages
- 44 Fictitious
- 45 Thought
- 46 City on the Arno
- 47 Ger. prison camp
- 50 Feeding stop in the wild
- 54 Singer from Ky.
- 56 Ballet wear
- 57 Adore or Taylor
- 58 Singing Carter
- 59 Wipe palm
- 60 Saucy
- 61 Villa d'—

DOWN

- 1 To boot
- 2 Victory
- 3 Three Wise Men
- 4 Spring
- 5 Isolate
- 6 On-line antelope
- 7 Kid stuff
- 8 Moray
- 9 Horse team
- 10 Nuncupative
- 11 Wear down
- 12 Choosing-game call
- 15 Flat seeds
- 16 Test
- 18 Sine leader
- 22 Casals'
- 23 Instrument
- 24 Couples
- 25 Like some stones
- 26 Pundit
- 27 Incursions
- 28 Seasoner
- 29 Cream
- 30 Bridge call
- 32 "The Prisoner of —"
- 35 Sealed additive
- 39 Mist
- 40 Shellfish
- 42 Accumulate
- 43 Dutch cheese
- 44 Headband
- 46 Certain horse



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LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midday on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

One sterling	1.2690/2700	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.3694/3701	Canadian dollars
	3.0715/30	West German marks
	3.4670/4700	Dutch guilders
	2.5805/25	Swiss francs
	61.80/85	Belgian francs
	9.3650/3750	French francs
	1963.05/0	Italian lire
	250.35/50	Japanese yen
	8.8925/9025	Swedish crowns
	8.8400/8500	Norwegian crowns
	11.0275/0375	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	317.40/317.90	U.S. dollars

LONDON STOCK MARKET

LONDON (R) — Equities were off the highs at the close but maintained a firm undercurrent, even though activity concentrated on stocks attracting bid interest, dealers said.

At 1400 GMT the FT 30 index was up 2.6 points at 1022.8 and at 1430 GMT the FTSE 100 index was 0.3 point higher at 1334.4. Debenhams rose 27p to 362 after the Burton bid which valued the company at around £455 million, or 325p per share, then eased back to 350p, before firming to 361 after rejection of the offer. Burton ended 42p higher at 500 while HABITAT Motocare, which has an option with Burton for 20 per cent of Debenhams's floor space was up 18p at 380. Gus "A" rose 18p to 832 in sympathy.

Brammer was 53p higher at 400, having rejected the bid offer from Buzel, off 8p at 465, which valued the company at £119.6 million. The offer is conditional upon the lapsing or withdrawal of Brammer's £41 million bid for Energy Services and Electronics, made last week. Energy Services was down 4p at 106 after 100.

Gill and Duffus touched a high of 210, up 63p, after news of a bid approach, before falling back to 190, up 43p on balance.

Bass fell to 554, down 18p on interim figures generally in line with expectations, before rallying to 567, off a net 5p.

YOUR DAILY
Horoscope
from the Carroll Righter Institute

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1985

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Your judgment is not apt to be very good today, and you would be wise to double-check information before you make decisive use of it. Don't sign anything of much importance.

ARIES (Mar. 21 to Apr. 19) Study the tasks that need to be done at home, and handle them efficiently. Do not quarrel with kin. Be sure to get your bills paid.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 to May 20) Be more objective when dealing with associates and get better results, also acknowledge letters graciously.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) You are not thinking quite straight today so do nothing that is of importance, but take under advisement.

MOON CHILDREN (June 22 to July 21) If somebody tries to hurt your feelings, do not argue but walk away briskly. Not a good day to try to see adamant friends.

LEO (July 22 to Aug. 21) A private affair is bothering you and you are confused about how to handle it, so wait awhile before doing so.

VIRGO (Aug. 22 to Sept. 22) You are meeting up with some opposition to a plan you have for gaining what you desire, so figure out how best to get over that annoyance.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Handle outside matters very conscientiously and don't jeopardize your good name in any way.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Go ahead with that plan you have been working on and get good results, but don't make any radical changes.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) A report could require some change, so be sure to make it and be accurate. Do not ink a good friend in some way.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20) Be gentle with an emotionally disturbed associate or there could be a severance of connections. Be more thoughtful of others.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 to Feb. 19) You may find work boring this day but handle it quickly and efficiently and it is soon done. Be happy at home tonight.

PISCES (Feb. 20 to Mar. 20) Be content with inexpensive pleasures, otherwise you could spend a lot and get little in return.

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, MAY 24, 1985

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Until noon you will be able to make some plan work to your advantage where your home or property are concerned. An obstacle arises in the path of some creative idea you wish to express.

ARIES (Mar. 21 to Apr. 19) In the morning be sure to keep promises you have made to kin, and later you can settle an account before working on your talents.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 to May 20) Handle important correspondence before solving some problem with an associate. The evening is harmonious at home.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) Improve your financial status early and then handle some job efficiently and profitably. Plan the future wisely.

MOON CHILDREN (June 22 to July 21) Get your appearance improved in the morning, and then soothe your mate's wounded pride. Set up appointments.

LEO (July 22 to Aug. 21) Plan a course through which you can gain your secret desires. Be pleasant with a close tie and later you can be with fine friends.

VIRGO (Aug. 22 to Sept. 22) You can take some wise steps in the morning toward gaining personal aims, and then you can start handling correspondence.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Some work with the public can have good results in the morning, then be sure to handle that financial affair wisely.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Get out to some interesting affair in the morning, and later handle a personal problem before meeting with good friends.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Be practical in the morning, and later get rid of some problem that has been vexing you for some time.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20) Finish those arrangements with a partner and then soothe a good friend in trouble before you handle business affairs.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 to Feb. 19) Work quietly and efficiently and all goes well in the morning, before you contact bigwigs you know.

PISCES (Feb. 20 to Mar. 20) Get future amusements well arranged in the morning, though a problematical affair from afar can irk you later.

IF YOUR CHILD IS BORN TODAY... he or she can accomplish a good deal where studying and sports are concerned in early youth, but upon reaching maturity will want to handle small projects and turn them into something very worthwhile. Be sure to encourage when some fine work is done and raise the incentive to do even better.

U.S. Senate passes foreign aid bill

WASHINGTON (USIA) —

Since 1981 few if any members of Congress have been happy with the way foreign aid has been funded. The money has been spent under "continuing resolutions," omnibus legislation containing unrelated elements, roughly at the previous year's levels.

This four-year-long stop-gap method has been allowed to continue simply because lawmakers could not agree on attaching political conditions to foreign assistance that the Reagan administration would accept and not veto.

So, time after time, Congress failed to pass a regular foreign aid authorization measure.

This year the Senate decided enough was enough.

Under the leadership of Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar, the panel drafted and passed a foreign aid measure. The full Senate could accept. The vote was an overwhelming 75 to 19 in favor after only two days of debate.

Senator Lugar said the administration supports the bill and that it should have "a pretty good chance" in the House of Representatives.

The House began debate on its version of the legislation May 16 but postponed final action until after the Memorial Day recess which ends on May 28.

Mr. Lugar's counterpart, Representative Dante Fascell, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, is equally determined to push a regular authorization bill through the House, though he is expected to have a more difficult time than Mr. Lugar had.

Mr. Lugar's successful technique was to convince his fellow senators not to propose controversial amendments that might

get bogged down in new debate.

No amendment, for example, deals with Nicaragua even though Mr. Lugar himself favored one that would allow the administration to give some aid to anti-Sandinista rebels. He argued that such an amendment could be attached to another bill.

Tough sanctions against the white minority government of South Africa were kept out of the bill too after Mr. Lugar assured his colleagues his committee would vote sanctions in a separate measure on June 4.

The Senate bill authorizes \$12,800 million for foreign aid programs in each of two fiscal years — 1986 and 1987 — plus \$2,000 million for emergency economic aid to Israel and Egypt. This is about \$400 million less each year than President Reagan had requested.

The largest part of the cut — \$344 million — was made in Mr. Reagan's \$6,700 million request for military aid programs.

The administration objected to these cuts but Secretary of State Mr. George Shultz endorsed the bill just before final passage and urged senators to vote for it.

The bill also contains amendments dealing with the Philippines, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Turkey, Greece and South American and Caribbean drug producing countries.

A non-binding amendment, approved 89 to 8, said future aid to the Philippines (beyond fiscal year 1986) should be granted only if Congress finds "sufficient progress" toward free elections and civil rights, the release of political prisoners and prosecution of the killers of opposition leader Benigno Aquino.

It would provide \$5 million in military and economic aid to non-communist rebels in Cam-

bodia, provided the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) acknowledged publicly that it is also providing material aid. The intent here is to demonstrate that the United States is playing a secondary role.

Such aid has been controversial in the Democratically-controlled House, especially among liberals who fear it might lead to renewed U.S. intervention in South East Asia.

Senate majority leader Mr. Robert Dole said the aid "does not represent the nose of any camel." Because the intent is clear and publicly stated, he said, "this is not the first installment of anything, or an open-ended commitment to do anything."

Until recently Secretary Shultz had asked Congress not to act on the emergency economic aid for Israel until the United States and Israel had agreed on the terms under which it would be provided.

Mr. Shultz said further U.S. assistance to boost the lagging Israeli economy would do little good unless the Israeli government undertook major reforms.

Then Prime Minister Shimon Peres promised action on 10 economic and budgetary reforms recommended by the United States, and Mr. Shultz gave Congress the green light.

Amendments concerning Latin American and Caribbean drug producers are aimed especially at Bolivia, Jamaica, Peru and Brazil. Bolivia, for example, is a major producer of coca, from which cocaine is made.

The toughest amendment would cut off aid to Bolivia beginning in fiscal year 1986 unless the administration certified to Congress that Bolivia had reduced coca production by 10 per cent.

\$15 million in humanitarian aid

would be given to rebels fighting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Defence spending

Under plans being debated in both houses of Congress, the administration would receive less money in 1986 than it would like for defence spending.

A Senate bill would hold defence spending at the 1985 level, allowing an increase only for inflation. The House version would provide no increase at all over the current year.

Defence Secretary Weinberger argues that the administration has been forced to accept reduced spending levels because of a misperception that the United States has regained its military strength.

Representative Les Aspin, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said the Defence Department may have received up to \$50,000 million more than it needed in the last four years. Mr. Aspin said the excess came about when Defence Department officials overestimated the rate of inflation.

Mr. Weinberger said any money appropriated, but not needed, will be returned to the treasury.

Both Republican and Democratic members of the Senate Armed Services Committee reacted angrily to Mr. Weinberger's May 15 disclosure that he had just found \$4,000 million in Pentagon accounts that could be applied to the 1986 budget.

Committee Chairman Barry Goldwater, a conservative Republican who has always argued for a strong defence, said Mr. Weinberger should have made this known months ago and that the defence secretary had lost credibility with the committee.

\$15 million in humanitarian aid

Officials pressure Kohl on jobless

BONN (R) — West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, already accused of weak leadership from within his cabinet, came under growing pressure Wednesday from his coalition partners to act decisively against unemployment.

Bavarian leader Mr. Franz Josef Strauss, head of the Christian Social Union (CSU), called on Mr. Kohl to invest one billion marks (\$355 million) in construction projects and make massive tax cuts to cut the number of jobs lost from 2.4 million.

Senior officials in the Free Democratic Party (FDP), which like the CSU is a junior coalition member, said it was also urging the chancellor to accelerate tax reforms in order to encourage firms to hire more workers.

The demands, and increasingly overt criticism of Mr. Kohl's leadership from the CSU, followed the resounding defeat of his Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in state elections last week.

Interior Minister Friedrich Zimmermann, a CSU member, accused Mr. Kohl of indecisive management at the weekend and Mr. Strauss, writing in the Bayemkurier newspaper, Wednesday said it was time for a new and forceful style of government.

Mr. Strauss said that if the centre-right coalition were to win national elections in 1987 it would have to abandon a tendency towards "hesitant and doubting" compromises on major issues.

Coalition party officials said the criticism of Mr. Kohl and the demands for action on unemployment reflected alarm over the dip in support for the government shown by the state poll.

The CDU crashed to its worst result in North Rhine-westphalia, gathering less than 37 per cent of the votes, while the opposition Social Democrats (SDP) jumped to 52 per cent.

Election analysts from all the major parties have said that unemployment was by far the biggest factor in turning voters away from the CDU.

Sources in the party said Mr. Kohl had indicated to a meeting of conservative parliamentarians Tuesday that he would announce some kind of measures to reduce

the jobless total by July.

Mr. Strauss said Wednesday a billion-mark investment in construction, triple the present government budget, would be the best way of ensuring rapid expansion in the depressed building industry.

Sources in the CDU and FDP said such a step would be rejected by Finance Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg, who has pursued tight budgetary policies in a bid for long-term growth.

But they said he might now be urged by Mr. Kohl to drop his objections to bringing forward the proposed tax relief measures.

Government strategy now includes a 19.4 billion mark (\$6.5 billion), two-stage tax cut planned for 1986 and 1988.

Mr. Strauss demanded Wednesday that it be teleported into one major cut next year, saying it was absurd to postpone a measure which would not reduce unemployment until after the 1987 election.

FDP leaders have made their support for such a move clear, and party chief Mr. Martin Bangemann warned Tuesday that West Germans would not accept present jobless levels for much longer.

"The voters will pay us back if we stick to the high figure of more than two million unemployed for a long period," he said.

The attacks on the chancellor produced the first serious speculation in the West German press about his future as leader since he came to power in 1982.

"The chancellor is seen as lacking leadership. The complaints against him can be reduced to the observation that he just lets things drift instead of seizing the initiative," the pro-government daily Die Welt said.

But all the major dailies concluded that Mr. Kohl was unlikely to be ousted before the next election, if only because there was no obvious alternative to him as leader.

'Gulf leaders back rebuilding Sudan'

ABU DHABI (R) — Sudanese Prime Minister Ali Gazouli Dafallah said Wednesday Gulf leaders had expressed support for the idea of an Arab "Marshall plan" to save Sudan from famine and economic crisis.

Mr. Dafallah, who arrived in Abu Dhabi Tuesday night on the fourth leg of a Gulf tour, told reporters Sudan urgently needed help to rejuvenate its economy and feed what he estimated were 10 million Sudanese threatened with starvation.

"After World War II, the Americans drew up the 'Marshall plan' to rebuild Europe, and what we

are talking about now is an Arab plan to rescue Sudan," he said.

Mr. Dafallah's government inherited a feeble, drought-hit economy and foreign debts of some \$9 billion from the regime of former president Jaafar Numeiri, ousted in an April 6 coup.

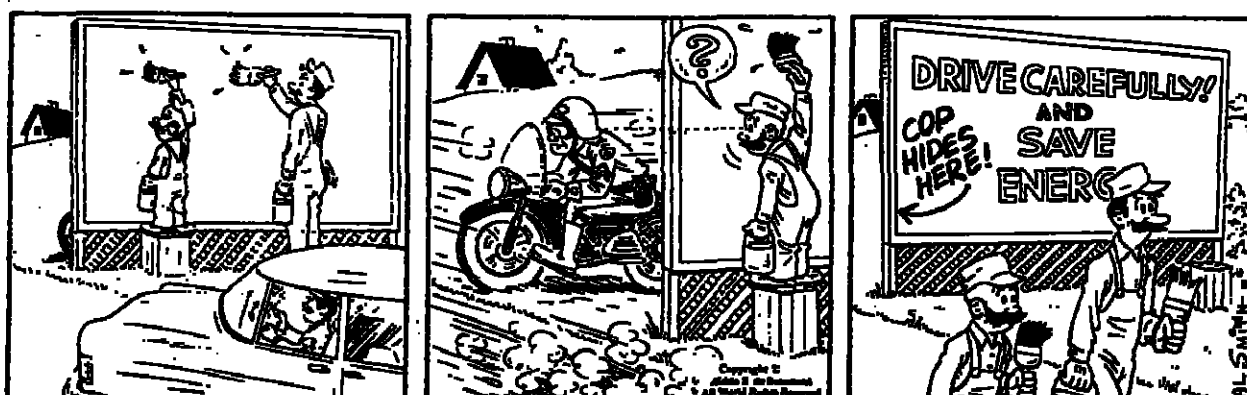
Mr. Dafallah is leading a high-level delegation, including the ministers of finance, education and transport, which has already visited Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait.

Gulf Arab states gave Sudan hundreds of millions of dollars in soft loans and grants under Numeiri.

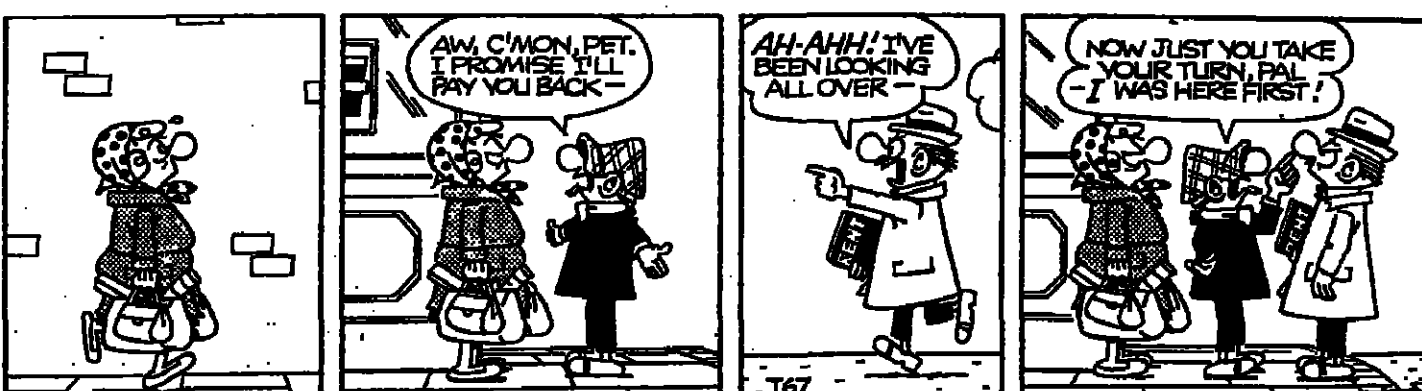
Peanuts



Mutt 'n' Jeff



Andy Capp

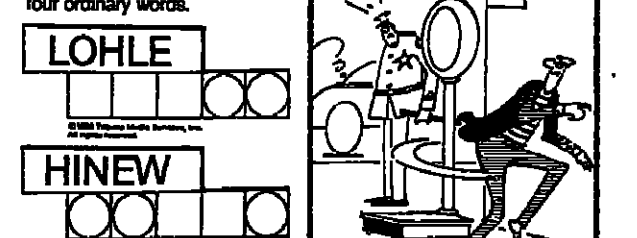


THE BETTER HALF By Harris



JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



WHAT HE DID AFTER PUTTING A LEAD SLUG IN THE SCALE.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

ANSWER: CAMEO BOUND RANCID OFFSET

Saturday's Jumble: Where thrift is the best virtue — IN AN ANCESTOR

Gandhi signs 2 accords at end of Moscow visit

MOSCOW (R) — Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev signed two agreements Wednesday covering expanded trade and scientific cooperation between their two countries to the year 2000.

The signing came near the end of a two-day visit during which both Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Gorbachev pledged to continue close ties and laid stress on trade relations, which have expanded over the past few years.

TASS News Agency said the accords covered basic guidelines for trade and scientific and technical cooperation between India and the Soviet Union for the next 15 years.

Earlier, Mr. Gandhi laid a wreath at Lenin's tomb in Red Square and at the Unknown Soldier's Monument close to the Kremlin Wall.

In a speech at a Kremlin banquet Tuesday night, Mr. Gorbachev called on the Soviet Union and India to join forces to reduce tension in Asia.

Mr. Gandhi, chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, is on his first foreign trip since taking over from his late mother, Indira Gandhi, under whose leadership India became the cornerstone of Moscow's policy in South Asia.

Both leaders appeared keen to underline that the special relationship would continue, stressing the prospects for increased trade.

"Friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union are an integral element of our foreign policy," Mr. Gandhi said in his speech

at the banquet, summarised by TASS News Agency. "We look forward to a rapid enlargement of this cooperation."

Mr. Gandhi, who has hinted at changes in India's foreign alignment, is due to visit Washington next month. But there have been no public signs of Soviet disquiet over this either before or during the visit.

Mr. Gorbachev praised India's world role, saying, "friendship and cooperation between our two countries are playing an ever more important and beneficial role in the entire system of international relations."

He called for Asian countries to work out a comprehensive approach to security, leading up to an all-Asia forum to search for solutions to the region's problems.

The Soviet leader, hosting his first major foreign guest since taking over as Communist Party leader on March 11, said Asian problems of peace and security were in some areas even more acute and painful than in Europe.

Diplomats said Mr. Gorbachev's proposal was a direct follow-on from earlier calls for Soviet-led Asian security, which have been coolly received by China.

Mr. Gorbachev's speech mostly devoted to Asian and Third World issues, but he renewed criticism of

President Reagan's plans to develop a space-based anti-missile defence system, popularly known as "Star Wars."

He said the project, officially known as the Strategic Defence Initiative, would increase the chances of nuclear war and sharply reduce the chance of reaching agreement with Washington at the Geneva disarmament talks.

Mr. Gandhi met Mr. Gorbachev and other Kremlin leaders, including Defence Minister Sergei Sokolov, for talks before going to the banquet.

The official Soviet News Agency TASS said the talks took place in an atmosphere of friendship and complete mutual understanding.

Both sides expressed profound satisfaction with the progress of Soviet-Indian relations, TASS said.

The report made no reference to the Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan, which India has refrained from criticising. But it said both countries opposed outside intervention in South West Asia.

In the only hint of discord, TASS said the two sides "exchanged opinions" on South East Asia, where Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea and continuing military presence is opposed by regional states. Vietnam is Moscow's key ally.

The two countries called for a constructive dialogue in the region, but did not spell out their own views.

Baldrige: Soviets, U.S. keen to hold summit

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige said Tuesday night after a meeting in Moscow with Mikhail Gorbachev that the Soviet leader was keen to hold a U.S.-Soviet summit and had no plans to delay the meeting.

Mr. Baldrige, heading the highest U.S. trade delegation to visit the Soviet Union since 1978, told ABC Television News in an interview from Moscow that he had delivered a letter from President Reagan to Mr. Gorbachev during the meeting.

He declined to give details but said the message touched on a U.S.-Soviet summit meeting and commended a new trade agreement between Washington and Moscow signed Wednesday as helping to reduce superpower tensions.

"As you know the president and (Mr. Gorbachev) have been in touch about the possibility of their meeting," Mr. Baldrige said.

But he added that although "both feel a meeting would be useful," no date has yet been set. "The details simply haven't been ironed out yet."

Mr. Baldrige, asked about a Washington Post report Tuesday that Mr. Gorbachev was too busy with domestic concerns to consider a summit this year, said: "I didn't get that message."

On Tuesday White House spokesman Larry Speakes refused to comment on the Post report that also said Mr. Gorbachev did not intend to come to the United Nations in New York in the autumn, removing the opportunity for an easily arranged informal meeting.

Mr. Reagan has invited the Soviet leader to come to Washington and Mr. Gorbachev replied favourably, but without setting a time or a place.

Mr. Baldrige, asked for his personal impressions of Mr. Gorbachev, said: "I found him to be able, attractive, articulate — an intelligent man, clearly, a strong man."

But he said he "suffers from a lack of information, or some distortion about the United States." He did not elaborate.

NATO defence aides open spring meeting

BRUSSELS (Agencies) — NATO defence ministers opened their annual two-day spring meeting Wednesday seeking ways to remedy critical deficiencies in the West's non-nuclear forces.

On the table will be a major planning document from NATO's military authorities which foresees the possibility that the Soviet Union could be able to launch a successful conventional attack on Western Europe within 20 years, military sources said.

The ministers' attention will be focused on short-term measures to overcome key deficiencies in NATO's ability to hold Warsaw Pact front line forces and strike at Soviet reinforcements inside Eastern Europe.

These include shortages of munitions, spare equipment and reserves of trained manpower as well as the lack of a common aircraft identification system to save NATO from shooting down its own planes.

The conventional defence initiative is aimed in part at placating U.S. congressional critics of West European defence efforts who have threatened American troop cuts unless Europe does more.

In the background will be a grim long-term threat assessment contained in the so-called conceptual military framework that Moscow is moving towards a "blitzkrieg" strategy that could overrun Europe without risking nuclear escalation or triggering Western reinforcement.

The ministers are likely to pledge special efforts within their national defence planning to improve combat readiness and reserve training, increase their firepower and

tackle specific weaknesses such as minesweepers or electronic warfare gear.

They are expected to renew a pledge to aim for a three per cent real annual increase in defence spending, although for most this goal is not realistic at present, NATO officials said.

Given constrained resources, the military framework was supposed to tell ministers where the priorities were for allocating their money in long-term defence planning.

But Dutch General Cornelis de Jager, chairman of NATO's military committee, said Tuesday the study did not and would not set priorities within essential conventional warfare moves which included the controversial concept of attacking enemy reinforcements far beyond the Central European battlefield.

In a bid to focus the meeting on conventional defence, the ministers are expected to avoid any joint statement on President Reagan's "Star Wars" space weapons research programme.

But the issue is still likely to loom large in private talks. Even before all 14 ministers had assembled in the Belgian capital the Reagan plan was the subject of a diplomatic flare-up.

Fredy Vreven, the Belgian defence minister, denied a U.S. report that his government had committed itself to participating in the programme, known formally as the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI).

Mr. Vreven had discussed the programme with U.S. Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger during a private meeting on Monday.

Florida firefighters bring most blazes under control

MIAMI (R) — Weary firefighters have brought giant brush fires under control throughout north eastern Florida, but blazes continue to threaten several small towns along the state's south western coast.

State officials said 500 fire departments, backed by National Guard troops, had contained all but five of 40 major blazes stretching along the peninsula from the Georgia border to the Everglades.

Damage from the five-day-old disaster, the worst in Florida history, has been estimated at more than \$150 million.

The fires have destroyed more than 150,000 acres (60,000 hectares) of swamp, brush and timberland throughout the state, claimed the lives of two firefighters and injured a dozen others.

Still burning out of control is a string of fires in south west Florida, where lack of rain, gusting winds and blistering heat helped spread flames across dry brush and swampland.

In big cypress swamp in the Everglades, a 6,000-acre (2,430-hectare) blaze raged and subsided Tuesday, confounding firefighters efforts to bring it under control.

COLUMNS 7 & 8

Man sentenced to death by sword

ABU DHABI (R) — A Sharia (Islamic) court in Ras Al Khaimah, in the northern United Arab Emirates (UAE), has sentenced an Indian to death by the sword for the murder last October of an Indian woman doctor, local newspapers reported Wednesday. The convicted murderer, named as Mohammad Jalal, has 15 days to appeal the sentence, which must be approved by the ruler of Ras Al Khaimah. Decapitation by sword is a rare sentence in the UAE, where executions are generally by firing squad. The papers did not say whether the execution would be public.

Woman gives birth to 3-legged child

MBABANE (R) — A Swazi woman gave birth to a three-legged baby boy this week and doctors say the child will survive and lead a normal life. A hospital spokesman said the baby's partially-formed third leg, attached to the buttocks, would be removed without difficulty in three months.

Charles, Diana called 'parasites'

SUNDERLAND (AP) — Left-wing students booed Prince Charles and Princess Diana as "parasites" and mocked Charles' big ears Tuesday and a man was arrested after erecting a pair of giant wooden ears on the roof of his home in this northern city. Geoff Dodds, a former Labour Party councillor, said police arrested him after he refused to obey their orders to take down the ears measuring 1.8 metres by 0.9 metres during the royal couple's visit to Sunderland. Dodds' three-story home is a few metres from an apartment visited by Charles and Diana. Dodds said he was held at Sunderland Central Police Station for 2½ hours and then released without being charged after Charles and Diana had left the city. Police confirmed they confiscated a pair of large wooden ears together with posters and arrested Dodds and another demonstrator.

Macho man 'to clip his wings'

BANGKOK (R) — Meatball man Tek Kor, Thailand's macho sex symbol, said Wednesday he's decided to call it quits at seven wives and 22 children. He's having a vasectomy. "I've decided not to have any more children so it's unlikely I'll have any more wives," he told a news conference organised by population control expert Mechai Viravadiya. A delighted Mechai said Tek Kor's example would "open the floodgates for more vasectomies in Thailand." Five of Tek Kor's seven wives and about 12 of his children were at the conference. So was a fortune teller who solemnly cast Tek Kor's horoscope and set July 4 as the most auspicious date for the vasectomy. Tek Kor, 44, renowned throughout Thailand for the delicious meatballs he sells, said he decided to have "his wings clipped" for economic reasons. He can't afford any more children and a vasectomy is a lot cheaper than providing his wives with contraception, he said. "I'm not a male chauvinist," he declared.

Woman delivers 4 boys, 2 girls, 1 dies

ORANGE, California (AP) — Six "very pink, very small" babies were delivered by Caesarean Section to a 30-year-old teacher who took a fertility drug, but a seventh infant was born dead, hospital officials said. Three dozen doctors, nurses and other medical staffers at children's hospital of Orange County assisted in the operation on Patricia Frustaci, who developed complications in her 28th week of pregnancy. The four surviving boys and two girls — ranging in weight from 481.9 grammes to 822 grammes — were listed in critical but stable condition.

Ershad to visit China on May 29

PEKING (Agencies) — China has a "time-honoured traditional friendship" with Bangladesh, a government spokesman said Wednesday in announcing Bangladesh President Hossain Mohammad Ershad's state visit May 29-June 3.

Gen. Ershad also came in 1979 as chief of army staff and in November 1982 as council of ministers' president and chief martial law administrator following the bloodless March 1982 coup that brought him to power.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Li Zhaoxing told a weekly news briefing that Gen. Ershad's official

goodwill visit builds on growing cooperation between the two countries, including a joint economic commission set up in 1982.

Meanwhile, Bangladeshis turned out again to vote in rural elections Wednesday after violence between supporters of rival candidates stopped polling on Monday.

At least 14 people were killed and more than 400 wounded in widespread clashes in the past week, officials said.

The opposition had called a boycott of the elections, partly held last Thursday and Monday but had not attempted to disrupt

voting, officials said. The 40 per cent turnout was satisfactory for a local poll, they added.

People in 148 centres hit by violence on Monday went to the polls again Wednesday.

President Hossain Mohammad Ershad said in a message to voters and candidates that the elections would be a milestone in efforts to restore democracy in Bangladesh after more than three years of military rule.

Gen. Ershad created the rural districts, called *upazillas*, to decentralise administration immediately after he seized power in a bloodless coup in March 1982.

Pakistan assembly to debate martial law, Afghan war

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan's newly-elected National Assembly opens its first session Thursday amid signs martial law and Afghanistans could dominate discussion.

The 237-seat assembly has been called to discuss and approve the national budget for the financial year beginning in July but members are allowed to raise any issue.

Several have said they would demand an immediate end to the eight-year-old martial law.

Others said they wanted to discuss Afghanistan, where fighting between Muslim guerrillas and the Soviet-backed government has forced an estimated three million refugees into Pakistan.

Pressure for a debate on these issues also comes from opposition politicians, who are not in the assembly because they boycotted the February elections. The military government barred political parties from the elections.

The assembly session follows a

campaign by military rulers to dissuade members from raising delicate issues like martial law and the government's support for Afghan guerrillas.

Military President Gen. Mohammad Zia Ul Haq said on Sunday the civilian administration of Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo — who Tuesday named seven more ministers to his 41-day-old government — could propose a date to end martial law.

"We have left the issue to the elected government," he told reporters at the end of a nationwide tour to meet the assembly members.

"Martial law will be lifted on the recommendation of the government and the National Assembly after they assess the country's situation," he said.

Gen. Zia promised that martial law imposed when he seized power in 1977 would be lifted after the February elections but did not give a date.

U.S. Senate committee approves genocide treaty

WASHINGTON (R) — The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has recommended U.S. ratification of a 1948 treaty outlawing genocide but incorporated Republican conditions that will trigger a tough fight in the full Senate.

The vote in favour was 10 to 0. All nine Republicans on the committee voted for it. All but one of the eight Democrats voted "present" to show disapproval of the conditions.

The treaty, drafted with U.S. help after the World War II, makes genocide a punishable crime under international law and defines it as intentional destruction of any national, racial, ethnic or religious group.

It has been backed by every U.S. president since the war except Dwight Eisenhower but languished in the Senate, which

has power to ratify treaties, due to conservative opposition.

Conservative Republican Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina led committee opposition to the treaty and proposed changes he said were needed to protect U.S. sovereignty.

His conditions, approved 9 to 8, would require specific U.S. consent before genocide cases involving the United States were submitted to the world court. They define genocide more specifically and exclude acts in the course of armed conflict.

Sen. Helms and others feared that without conditions, Nicaragua and other countries with whom Washington has adversarial relationships could use the treaty to U.S. disadvantage.

The Republicans have a majority in the 100-seat Senate.

Pope returns satisfied with 11-day Benelux trip

ROME (R) — Pope John Paul, back in Italy after an 11-day trip to the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium, said he was "satisfied" with the tour despite having heard much criticism of the Catholic Church.

"At some point you have to go and say the essential things," he said, adding that he thought his visit had helped to strengthen unity between Dutch Catholics with the universal church.

Asked if he was disappointed by the unexpectedly small crowds that greeted him in the Netherlands, the Pope said: "I suppose that is not a good attitude, to be disappointed."

There had been controversy in the Dutch church before his visit and it would probably continue, the Pontiff said.

Asked about critical remarks he had heard about Catholic doctrine, the Pope, looking fit despite the rigours of the visit, said: "The criticism was a bit one-sided." But one could always learn from criticism.

Speaking in Polish, he told questioners who asked him about his expression of support for the independent trade union Solidarity in his native Poland, during a meeting in a stadium two nights ago: "Of course, this was my duty."

On Lebanon, the Pontiff said: "I am deeply engaged in this problem. I am trying to do everything I can. Believe me, I am thinking every day what can be done."

Asked about possible Vatican mediation in the conflict, the Pope said: "The problem is that the Syrians are already accepted by every side as mediators." He did not elaborate.

Meanwhile, Belgium's Catholic Primate, Cardinal Godfried Danneels, has played down the significance of church criticism during Pope John Paul's Belgian trip and said he had opened the way for a new evangelical drive to strengthen Roman Catholicism.

On his return to Rome after the tour of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, the Pope said he was satisfied with his 11-day visit despite protests and criticism.

"At some point you have to go and say the essential thing," he told reporters.

His tour of the three countries was marked by outspoken criticism of church teachings on moral and social issues.

Danneels told a news conference shortly after the Pontiff left for Rome Tuesday night that those who criticised him represented small minorities of intellectuals.

THE WEEKEND CROSSWORD

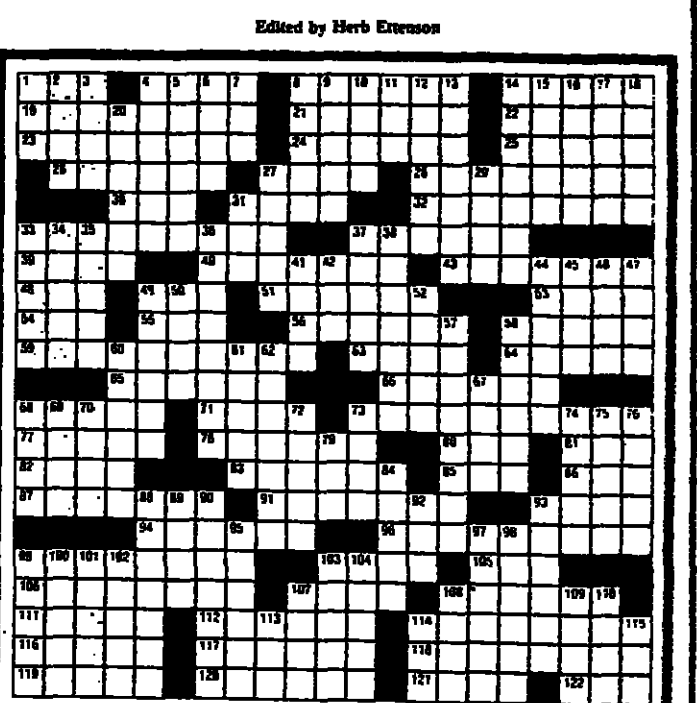
PEOPLE OF MEANS
By William Caster

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Diagrammes 19 X 19, by Neil McCarthy

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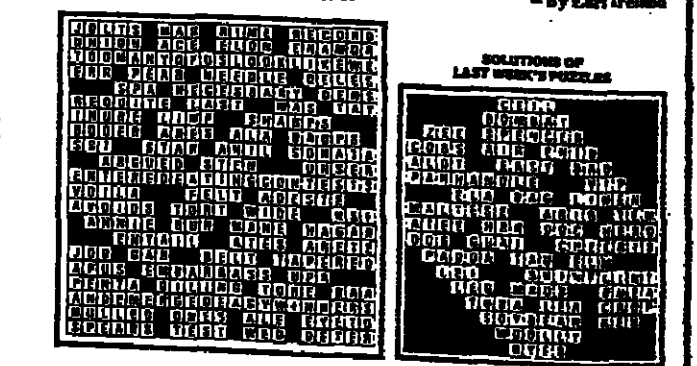


Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Gernot met guardman for happy, festive report, opined, "We've got to stop eating this way."
2. Unlikely miracles may surely happen, but for us to plan for them can be risky business.
3. We can be glad the wild elders are not without: only teen-age boy's side.
4. Much else has a cause about more use of the abacus for calculus.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. SYRUTE UPHRFX WYGMINGHRE HPWDIV
FRAI FMYGUDV YN SAFE BANO: RPNW UDDN
PIX SYRX SYRX RYWDL — By Marlene E. Adams
2. EA OSH BTTP OSHCYFPA OSH REZZN REW
BZF NS YDSCV XEXX EW NXF SPORTEDY
— By Connie Easfield
3. ZLYDA OLUMTSAR SATO MPFO IPAUP LELMP
EDOS SDT BSEKUPFY BSELOOPE — By Lela H. Jones
4. LJTP HLYS JHTJEB JSNP NTESE GBJ YS
KDOT NDET KRAETAL — By Earl Ireland



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